New Republic

MARCH 1, 1948

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WHO'S HOLDING UP HOUSING

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HENRY WALLACE

★ THE LOBBYISTS...
HELEN FULLER

★ THE VESTED INTERESTS...
DONALD CRAIG

15¢

VICTORY IN THE BRONX

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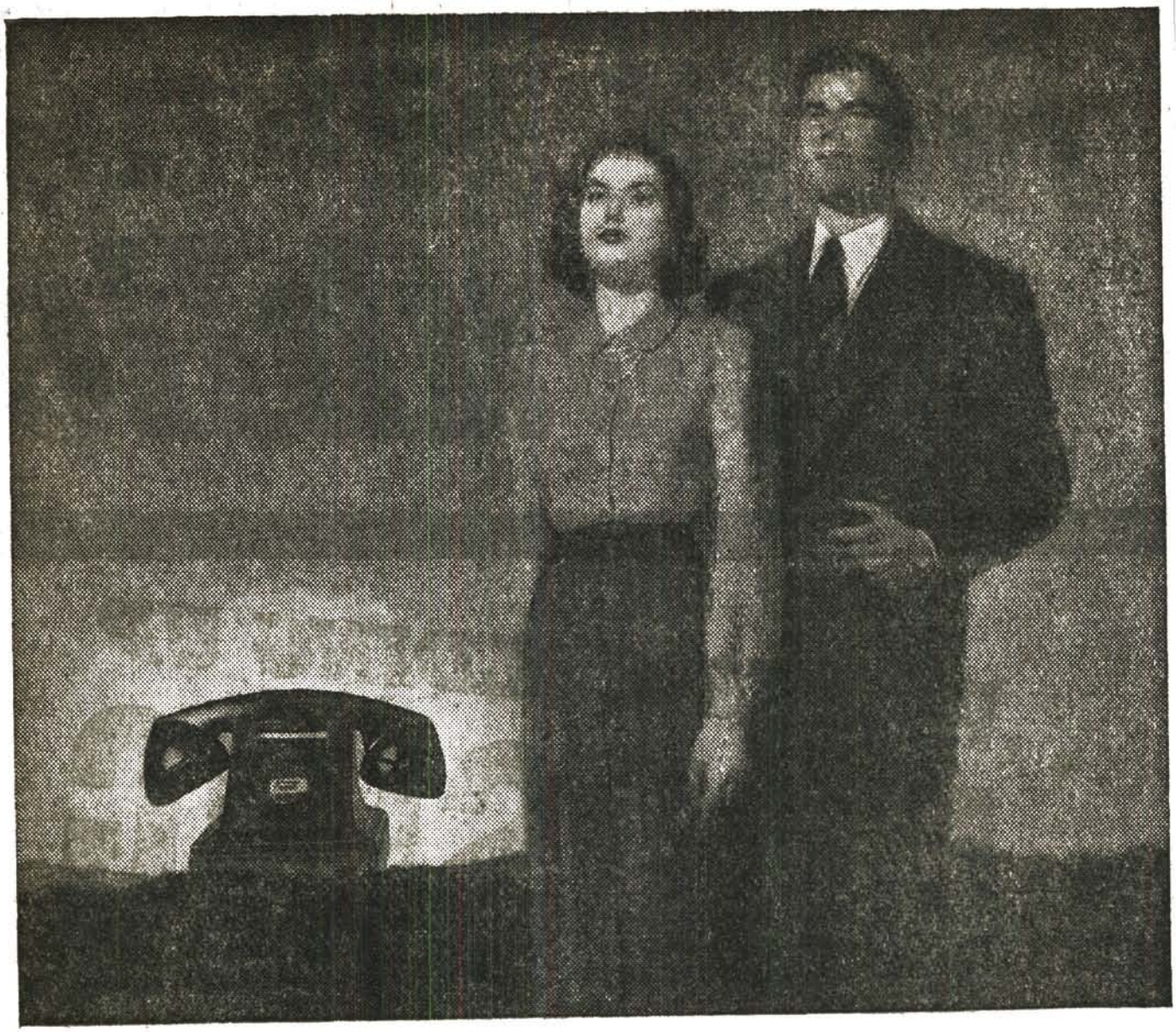

"THE BEST IS YET TO BE"

The telephone will be seventy-two years old this year. Its development within a single lifetime has been a modern miracle. Yet it is only the beginning.

There are any number of men and women in the telephone business today — some just starting out — who will see greater progress than the past has ever known.

Year by year the next half century will be increasingly theirs. New leaders will appear from among them. Step by step, rung by rung, they will mount the ladder to the top. For telephone management is employee management and comes up from the ranks.

There will be more good jobs in the telephone business in 1958 and 1998 than now. It just can't help being that way. For of all the trades and professions there are few more interesting and necessary.

So the future is bright for those who work for the telephone company, for those who use the telephone and for those who have faith in its growth and development. "The best is yet to be."

BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM

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New Republic

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WASHINGTON WIRE

THE BIG STEEL COMPANIES got together last week and announced a price increase in unfinished products. This may, or may not, be extended to their whole line. No advance effort was made to placate public opinion.

It was a bad, brutal performance. It has started to blow up the inflation soap bubble all over again. We predicted this would happen. We feel pleased as a prophet, indignant as a citizen.

What most people don't know is that there has been a duel going on behind the scenes between the Administration and the steel industry ever since the President's Council of Economic Advisers went to bat. President Truman personally intervened last year, trying to get steel to be sensible. In his July 21 economic report he cited the industry by name—"steel companies should exercise extraordinary caution at this stage," he said, noting "recent favorable earnings."

The urgency of caution and the size of earnings have both vastly increased since then. Forty-seven big companies made profits after taxes of $283 million in 1946; in the past year these have jumped a half, to an estimated $430 million, highest in history.

The pace-setting steel industry won't listen to reason. The soap bubble has started to expand again. Wait till it pops.

Double trouble. In the privacy of this column we have to admit that Truman's delivery of his speech at the Jackson Day dinner was pretty sad. He made two interpolations, both ill advised. He said, "George Washington wasn't the first President who had cabinet trouble." Try and figure that out. He followed this up by endorsing Teddy Roosevelt when he meant Franklin. The latter interjection is said to make Oyster Bay safe for the Democrats.

Truman is suffering real trouble for his bold and (we think) brave stand for Southern civil liberties. Empty seats of boycotting Southerners faced him. The GOP is happy. The poor Democratic showing in the Bronx election, the difficulty of the President in raising the body heat of the independent voters, are counted on the Republican side.

One hears more Taft talk in Washington. Almost certainly, a Republican victory this fall will mean a return to something like McKinley-ism in Congress, temporarily at least. The erratic fluctuation of Truman's popularity is one of the singular things in the past two years. His stock took a dive last week, but it is too soon to count him out.

FDR monument. Fannie Perkins and the Roosevelt "shelter belt" were good for a laugh any time during the New Deal. The nation now understands better the start of the shelter belt. The 1935 trees are today taller than houses. The great belt running from Canada down to Texas, through the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma, is proving its value; the farmers have been steadily adding to it and, rather sheepishly, praising FDR's name.

Well, there have been few public monuments to Roosevelt (if we except the two-term-limitation amendment which Republicans are still trying to write into the Constitution), but the "Roosevelt Shelter Belt" seems to be here to stay.

Tariffs ahead. It isn't widely known that Bob Taft favors a customs union with Canada. When the debate occurs this spring on extending the Hull Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act another three years, the fact will come out. Taft wants really stiff Smoot-Hawley rates on other nations, but

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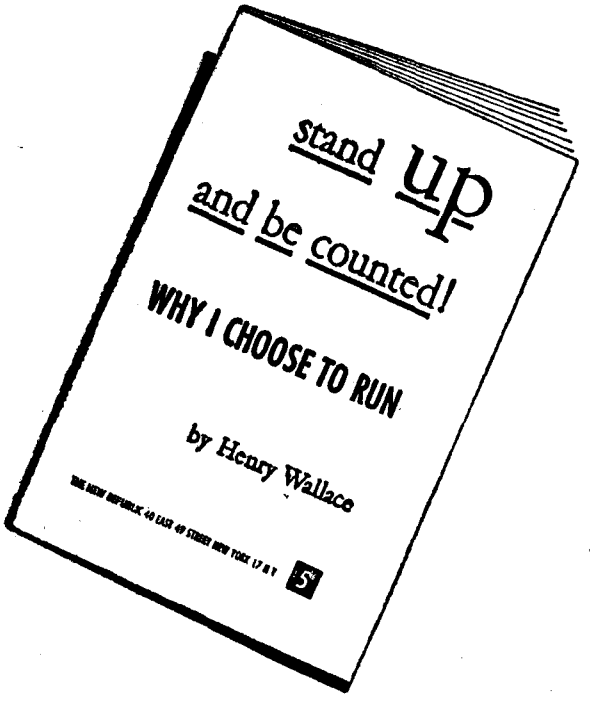

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New Republic

is willing to offer free trade to the Dominion—and nobody else.

Canada has no idea of accepting any such arrangement. It would tie her irrevocably to the uncertain American economy, and in return for lower tariffs to the States, would mean enclosing her with Republican tariffs built up against the rest of the world. Incidentally, since Hoover, Americans have almost forgotten what a big tariff battle is like. Today the GOP once more is in control of Congress and the reciprocal-trade-treaty-renewal debate looms ahead.

GOP boner. One of the phony "economies" born of last year's budget debate is coming home to roost. The Treasury asked $2 billion to meet expected income-tax refunds. The congressional majority cut this to $1.2 billion and claimed the difference as a "saving." It looked good—on paper. The Treasury waited. Now its estimates of the amount needed to meet tax refunds are coming true.

Unless Congress sees fit to restore the slashed item by April 1, the Treasury will run out of appropriations. Under the law it must pay six-percent interest on refunds that are not promptly paid. Indications are the GOP will quietly restore the money and forget the "saving."

ADA. Together with other Washington correspondents, we came to the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia to watch the three-day ADA show. Lots of comparisons were drawn between this and the convention of the Progressive Citizens of America. Compared to the noisy, parading Chicago gathering, this one was mild and rather cerebral. Nobody at Philly got hoarse shouting. It seemed at times as though practically the whole New Deal brain trust was on hand holding an alumni meeting.

It was our impression that the ADA is long on leaders but short on a Leader. Also that it may devote most of its strength to local congressional contests this fall rather than to the presidential fight.

Washington T. R. B.

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VOLUME 118, NUMBER 9, ISSUE 1735, NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 1, 1948 **New Republic**

THE WEEK

SUGGESTION

Most engaging idea of the week comes from David Raymond, Foreign Editor of *Reynolds News*, London, who writes us from New York City:

"Possibly I am abusing the hospitality of the USA in offering the suggestion that in view of the Bronx election result the Democrats should withdraw from the presidential contest so as not to split the Third Party vote."

IN THE DARK

If Harry Truman didn't know how much his stock was slipping, he was the only top Democrat at the big Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner party in Washington who was still in the dark. The wise old-timers who would talk honestly, off the record, admitted they had stopped inviting bets on the November outcome. The Henry Wallace victory in the Bronx, the Palestine and civil-rights controversies, and the Southern hullabaloo all pointed the wrong way for the Truman party.

The loyal Democrats who paid $300,000 to celebrate the party holiday in the nation's capital came ready to cheer and shout. But the President's uninspired words and his even more than usually monotonous tone produced only a few outbursts of mild applause, barely stronger than he received in his latest appearance before Congress. If this was the best Truman could do, heaven help him with an audience not bent on enthusiasm.

All the speakers pretended not to notice the places which Senator Olin Johnston (D, S. C.) and other Southerners left vacant for fear they would be "seated next to Negroes." It was generally thought that the "Southern trouble" would blow over by convention time.

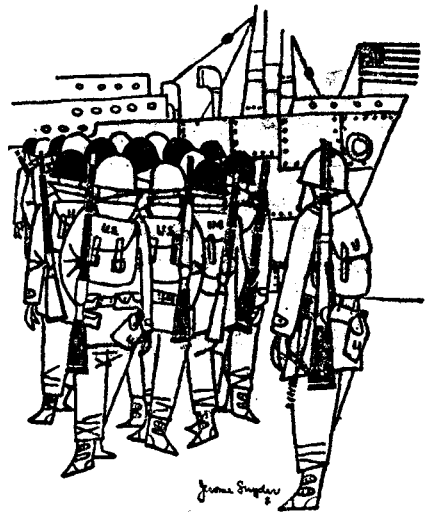
And there was not even a veiled reference to the Democratic defeat in New York. But that was by far the most discussed subject at all the cocktail parties preceding the big dinner, at the Democratic National Committee and in the Capitol cloakrooms.

The condemned man ate a hearty dinner.

DISPENSABLE MAN

Eight months ago Major General William G. Livesay arrived in Athens to head the American Aid Mission to Greece. His job was to advise the Greek commanders in their war against the guerrillas, and to keep an eye on how effectively US shipments of guns and ammunition were being put to use. But Livesay, who commanded the 91st Division at Anzio, was no diplomat. So this week he is packing his gear for the trip back home.

Washington explains that Livesay is simply returning to report to the President and await reassignment. But from Athens the New York *Herald Tribune's* Homer Bigart radioed another story: General Livesay had been using too many Regular Army expressions of contempt for the Athens government.



"General Livesay," Bigart commented acidly, "has been at odds with Greek politicians almost since the day he arrived last June 19. An outspoken and completely candid soldier, he told the Greeks he thought their carping demand for more and more artillery was a lot of twaddle, and that they could very well lick the guerrillas with what they had. . . .

"Recently he charged that the top command of the Greek army was being demoralized by threat of political removal. He felt that the army was falling too much under the control of Athens, and was shocked by the spirit of defeatism which, it seemed, was being spread deliberately down through the ranks. . . ."

Few tears. The story had the familiar ring of the Chiang-Stilwell affair in China, 1944; it was another case of a soldier getting too engrossed in his responsibilities. And, like Nanking, Athens wept few tears over the loss of an able general. There were plenty more where Livesay came from, it seemed.

Just to strengthen this impression, the State Department's director of Near Eastern Affairs, Loy Henderson, promised in Washington that the US will not "stand idly by" in the Greek civil war and hinted at a new AEF. Perhaps the Yanks were coming.

WALLACE AND TAYLOR

Senator Glen H. Taylor of Idaho will be Henry Wallace's vice-presidential running mate on the third-party ticket. He announced his break with the Democrats in a radio broadcast on February 23 in which he said: "I am not leaving the Democratic Party; it

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left me. Wall Street and the military have taken over." He emphasized that he will do what he can to aid the election of liberal candidates to Congress on the Democratic and Republican tickets.

On the same day, the Institute of Public Opinion released its latest report on the strength of various presidential candidates. It showed the Wallace strength to be great enough, if Truman and Dewey were the Democratic and Republican choices, to cause the Democrats to lose New England and the Middle Atlantic and East Central states, as well as some others—or, in other words, the election. This would be true if Truman received the same vote that Roosevelt did in 1944.

Walter Winchell is conducting a postcard ballot on presidential candidates. His first returns showed Eisenhower in the lead with 10,664; Wallace next with 3,109; and Dewey, Vandenberg and Truman following in that order, with 2,972, 2,623 and 1,957 respectively. The poll was begun after Eisenhower had taken himself out of the race. Mrs. Roosevelt, who is not a candidate, received only 400 votes fewer than Truman.

STEEL GOES UP

The bewildered US consumer who thought he might be able to pare a few pennies off the family budget if the price breaks in food and fibers lasted, became aware last week that even if they did the gain would be offset by increased prices of refrigerators, automobiles, housing and anything else with steel in it.

Since last October the steel industry has been quietly jacking up prices here and there, to a total, according to Philip Murray, of $229 million a year. Last week's increases averaging at least $5 a ton on semi-finished-steel goods are actually much less startling than many unnoticed markups. The higher price of semi-finished steel will cost manufacturers about $21 million in the coming year. But a boost in the price of pipe a few days earlier will cost them $43 million.

Most manufacturers who use steel will pass the price increase on to consumers whose resistance is growing.

The simple arithmetic of wage-price relationships in steel over the past 15 months disproves the companies' contention that wage increases were chiefly responsible for the price boosts. Steel has upped its prices a total of $14 a ton during a period when there has been just one wage increase. That increase, in April, 1947, according to the industry's own figures, added only about $3 a ton to the cost of steel.

Profit figures also are eloquent: in 1947 US Steel netted $126 million against $88 million in 1946; Bethlehem's 1947 take was $51 million against $41 million in 1946; and Republic tucked away $31 million last year, almost double its $16 million 1946 profit.

Big Steel's latest price increase can be more easily understood in terms of forthcoming wage negotiations. The United Steelworkers' executive board decided last week, just a few days before the price boost was announced, to open negotiations for a "substantial" wage increase and a health-and-welfare program.

Health program. At the time of last year's contract, the companies agreed to study the health-and-welfare problem with the USW. The studies have gone forward and, as agreed, the plan will come up at this year's renegotiation.

It is virtually certain that the USW will get a good settlement. And it is taken for granted that the steel firms will put into effect a further general price rise shortly afterward, blaming higher wages and saying that they have had no general increase since last July. Last week's move, therefore, appears merely as a last quick nip at the consumer's pocketbook before a big boost is announced next summer.

Dialectical Drama

LOS ANGELES (NR correspondent)

STATE SENATOR JACK TENNEY, who as head of California's "Little Un-American Activities Committee" has reopened his drive to purify West Coast drama, came up last week with a spicy tidbit on subversion in the theater. A committee investigator, Tenney revealed, has discovered that the Hollywood Actors' Laboratory has produced *two* plays by a Russian named Anton Chekov.

THE COURT DECLINES

The Supreme Court, considering the case of Mrs. Ada Sipuel Fisher for the second time this year, has handed down a decision that gives little aid to Southern Negroes seeking admission to all-white schools and colleges. Faced with the refusal of the University of Oklahoma Law School to admit Mrs. Fisher, the court has declined to press the case further.

Last January 12, the court ordered Oklahoma to provide Mrs. Fisher legal education equal to that given other students. When Oklahoma offered her "separate but equal" facilities, she appealed again.

This was the appeal which was rejected last week, with the claim that the basic issue of segregation was not involved in the case. The court accompanied its decision with a host of mandamuses and certioraris which quite successfully obscured the point to the layman. But this legalistic doubletalk did not get the support of Justice Wiley B. Rutledge, who delivered a blistering dissent.

SELL BY SMELL

If a campaign just started by the *Reporter*, a magazine of direct-mail advertising, really gets rolling, those diehards of sales resistance who turn up their noses at high-powered advertising may have to use clothespins. From the pages of the current issue something called "Persian Moss" assails the nostrils of readers—the ink is impregnated with a perfume of that name—and the leading editorial goes all out in favor of "fragrance for selling." The idea is to get advertisers to sell by smell—candy sellers using copy smelling of chocolate, fruit merchants of oranges, etc. We're waiting hopefully for it to extend to gasoline. And fertilizer.

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WHAT HAPPENED IN THE BRONX

by Michael Straight

IT WAS Ed Flynn's home ground: "The greatest Democratic county north of the Mason-Dixon line." The results of the special congressional election were:

Leo Isacson, ALP	22,697
Karl Propper, Democrat	12,578
Dean Alfange, Liberal Party...	3,840
Joseph A. De Nigris, Republican	1,482

Up in Ben Gilhooly's Democratic Club on Westchester Avenue, the boys sat down and talked things over. They spread out tally sheets on tables in the long, bare room.

"I see where the papers say the light vote beat us," one district captain remarked. "Light vote, hell! Look at these!" The tallies showed that in one after another of the districts that make up Gilhooly's Fifth Assembly District, a quarter to a third of the enrolled Democrats who went to the polls voted for Isacson.

Harry's silence. "You want to know why?" asked one old-time captain. "It was the silence of Harry Truman. He double-crossed us! When he came in, he promised to follow in the footsteps of our late President, FDR. All he's done is march backwards. I go to my people now, they slam the door in my face! They say, 'What have the Democrats done for me?' They say, 'Look at my boy, whatsa he got?' They say, 'Leave us alone.' Puerto Ricans, Jews, Negroes, Irish, Greeks—all the same! I go through the streets and the boys shout, 'Hey, politician! How's about a home for me?' Me—with my son-in-law three years overseas and living in my apartment!

"We built enough during the war. Start building homes now for our boys and the rest'll take care of itself."

"How about Palestine?" said another captain. "Two years ago you couldn't raise five bucks for Palestine. Now they're all inflamed." He picked up an Isacson pamphlet that declared in Yiddish: "Truman spills Jewish blood for Arab oil."

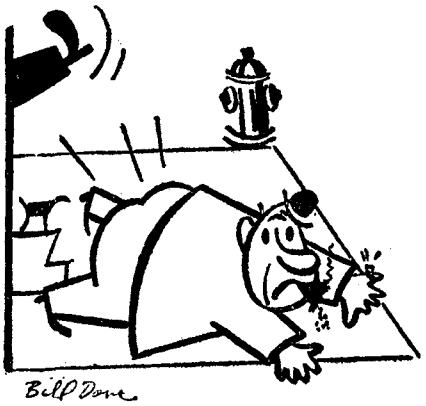
"The Jews were betrayed by this arms embargo," the captain said, "and don't think the Negroes and the other minorities don't know it. They say: 'First the Jews get kicked around, then it'll be us.' They won't take it any more."

"It was dirty," a third captain broke in. "The ALP had three well trained crews in for three weeks—Marcantonio's men—working on my people. My own people said to me, 'Why should we vote for your man when he evicted tenants?' They even convinced them that Mrs. Roosevelt was up here speaking for Isacson, not for Propper!"

"Everything is civil service now. That's the real trouble," an old man muttered. "Why, in the old days every fireman and policeman owed his job to the organization. If he didn't get out the vote he was fired. Now it's all examinations and they don't owe nothing to no one no more.

The other side. It's a short ride from Gilhooly's Pondiac Club to ALP headquarters on the second floor of the Hunt's Point Palace. You drive through streets that are dank and dark, still piled with dirty snow and refuse, kept from the sun by the El that grates and shakes night and day. The streets are lined with tenement houses, forty years old, crowded, poorly heated and badly lighted.

There are only three or four elevator apartment buildings in the entire neighborhood. It's a district where tenants' leagues fight every eviction and a nickel rise in grocery prices means a lot.



ALP headquarters looked like the aftermath of a cyclone. Half-eaten sandwiches lay on tables and chairs. Posters of Roosevelt, Wallace and Isacson and leaflets in half a dozen languages covered the floors. "Flynn's a bum," sang a girl, sweeping up the mess. "He wouldn't deal with the ALP and now he's licked!

"It was the fur workers, the department-store clerks, the AYD," she said. "They came in from Jersey, Pennsylvania, Buffalo, all over! They slept on the floors! They worked all night! The Democrats tried to vote their people between six and seven at night. We were up at five in the morning! We got the people out of bed and sent them to the polls before work. We thought they'd be angry, but they weren't. We carried every district but one," she added, "and, you know, up there some people make as much as $100 a week!"

Elbow grease. "It was just a matter of hard work," an ALP organizer said. "We had 300 to 400 workers out every day. Two hundred were active members of the PCA and the ALP up here. The rest were sent up by the unions. On election day we had 2,000 workers. And 250 union organizers were the core.

"The ALP was supposed to be washed up when the Amalgamated Clothing Workers pulled out," he went on. "Well, this is the area where Murray Weinstein of the Amalgamated, Local 4, was the ALP leader. This was the one area where the Amalgamated really dug in and took hold politically. Weinstein wouldn't support us or Flynn. Flynn wouldn't accept a deal with the Liberal Party. He made the Liberals stay in the race because he hoped they'd draw off the Amalgamated votes. But the Amalgamated stuck with the ALP.

"For the record," he said, "we're

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Britain Fights Bankruptcy

LONDON (NR correspondent)

IF THE European Recovery Program is not enacted, or even if it is seriously delayed, Britain faces national bankruptcy. This is the stark reality, made clear by figures showing that Britain fell more than $2.7 billion short of paying her way in 1947.

Against this, one must judge the steps announced by Sir Stafford Cripps, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to curb wages, prices and profits. He has said the government will view with disfavor any further increases in wages and profits, and will seek actual reductions in prices. He has demanded voluntary cooperation of all interests and has warned that, without such coöperation, democratic government may break down and the extreme Left or the extreme Right take power.

There will be sanctions to supplement, but not to replace, voluntary coöperation. In the case of wages, the government will refuse any increase in controlled prices or subsidies to employers who seek them in order to grant higher wages. The only exception will be undermanned industries which need to attract workers.

Price curbs. To stabilize and, if possible, to reduce the cost of living, price regulations will be greatly extended. The British never have followed the OPA practice of freezing almost all prices. Since the government had power to direct labor during the war, there was no danger of it flowing to non-essential industries with uncontrolled prices. Through a subsidy program, the cost of living was held down by selling a number of basic necessities well below actual cost. These subsidies amount at present to almost $2 billion a year.

Now the range of goods brought under price control will be rapidly extended until it covers almost every article sold in ordinary shops. The first step will be a "standstill" at the average level of December and January. Meanwhile, in consultation with the Trades Union Congress and the Federation of British Industries, a permanent program for lowering the price level will be framed and applied. The OPA device of "ceiling prices" will be widely utilized at the expense of the previous "cost-plus-profit-margin" system.

In addition, profits will doubtless be dealt with directly. There is widespread unhappiness among workers at the large profits some businesses are making. The most spectacular have been made in goods or services which could take advantage of inflation in Britain or abroad. The drying up of the world sellers' market will slash export profits, and anti-inflation measures at home will hit the greyhound racetracks. Nevertheless, the rank and file of the Labor Party demands, and will doubtless receive, a further direct attack on profits.

Will it work? Will the program work? It will certainly make heavy demands on the machinery of enforcement—machinery which, so effective for six years of war and two years of comfortless peace, has lately shown signs of severe strain. The recent welling up of black-market practices shows that there must be a renewed determination on the part of Britons to work and sacrifice.

It is still too early to gauge the response of people, and of employers and workers in particular. On the trade-union side, loyalty to the Labor Government pulls one way, and the considerable Communist element the other. The Trades Union Congress is in constant consultation with the cabinet ministers concerned, and has not yet announced its decision.

claiming a victory for opposition to the Marshall Plan. Half the voters never heard of the Marshall Plan! They voted against talk without action. They voted against the grim sordidness of slums. They voted against the divorce of politics from reality. They voted for Wallace, because he talked to the people, and because they think he cares whether rents are high or low, whether groceries go up or down, whether people are hungry and cold."

"A one-shot. Not even an incident," an old union leader told us. "Thirty years ago the Socialist Party did better in New York. Where is it now?"

Mrs. Roosevelt disagreed. "Two things worry the American people," she wrote after the Bronx election, "inflation and the fear of war. The Republicans and Democrats had better bestir themselves to remove the people's two great anxieties, or the course of our government in the next few years may be surprising to both parties."

CALIFORNIA GIVES UP

California's long battle to deprive American-born sons of aliens (Japanese in particular) from holding land in the state has finally ended in defeat. As a result of a Supreme Court ruling that Fred Oyama may hold title to land purchased by his unnaturalized guardian, Attorney General Fred N. Howser has announced that California will drop 40 other similar suits aimed at voiding such titles.

Howser declares that the decision makes the Alien Land Law practically unenforceable. Even though the Justices studiously avoided a ruling on the law's constitutionality, the court's support of the Oyama claim on narrower technical grounds has convinced Howser that it is useless to prosecute similar cases. There is also the possibility, he adds, that further prosecutions might cause the court to declare the law unconstitutional.

The state's decision to drop enforcement of the law will save ownership of millions of dollars' worth of agricultural property for families of Japanese, Chinese and Hindu origin.

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THE ADA'S DILEMMA: HST OR GOP

by Willard Shelton

BEHIND the eloquent liberal words spoken at the first national Americans for Democratic Action convention in Philadelphia was palpable restlessness. This was based on the unhappy fear of many rank-and-file delegates—a well grounded fear—that the ADA is bound, willy-nilly, to President Harry S. Truman in this election year.

Of course, the convention did avoid mentioning Truman's name. And it did withhold endorsement of any presidential candidate until the major parties have made their nominations and adopted their platforms. But the rank-and-file worriers had little hope that either of the candidates, Truman or the GOP nominee, and either of the platforms would hold any more concrete promise of true liberalism next summer than now.

Against Wallace. There was no doubt how the 600-odd delegates felt about the third-party candidacy of Henry A. Wallace. The convention "unreservedly condemned" it and went on record as declaring that the introduction of third-party candidates in congressional races "can serve only to elect an isolationist and reactionary Congress." It also voted against outlawing the Communist Party despite the delegates' vigorous anti-Communist stand and their oft-repeated contention that Wallace is being used as a tool of US Communists.

The general trend was illustrated by the election as national chairman of Leon Henderson, former OPA head, to succeed Wilson W. Wyatt, former Federal Housing Expediter. Six vice-chairmen also were named: Paul A. Porter, former OPA administrator; Mayor Hubert H. Humphrey of Minneapolis; Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr.; Hugh Ernst, head of the AFL restaurant workers; Emil Rieve, president of the CIO textile workers; and George Edwards, chairman of the Common Council of Detroit.

The horns of the ADA dilemma are labeled GOP and HST. It's hard to believe that the ADA will support any imaginable Republican presidential candidate. Yet the ablest speech the convention heard—from Republican Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon—gave his personal endorsement to Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg. And the ADA doesn't trust President Truman's capacity to appeal convincingly to liberals. When Walter P. Reuther, president of the CIO United Automobile Workers, declared his disquiet at the gap between Truman's program and performance, the applause from the delegates was hearty and spontaneous.

Some of the younger Students for Democratic Action, plus the Illinois ADA delegation, spearheaded a drive for "terms" to the President—a commitment for a liberal vice-presidential nominee, for example. Political realists pointed out that, until the ADA was in a position to deliver significant numbers of votes, it could scarcely demand "terms."

In short, it seems the ADA will be for Truman in the end, unless—as one spokesman remarked was not impossible—some miracle should provide a new Democratic nominee at the convention.

ADA's growth. The ADA has grown up since its organization barely a year ago in Washington. Its budget last year approached $200,000. It has chapters in key cities. In some states—notably Minnesota and Illinois—it has a basis of solid organization for effective political action. (Even in Illinois, however, the ADA local group has never pulled such masses of voters as the Wallace-supporting Progressive Party rolled up last November for its judicial candidates.)

An impressive list of AFL and CIO leaders gave their prestige and support to the convention. A yearlong struggle inside the CIO between the ADA and the Progressive Citizens of America was ended as dozens of CIO functionaries flocked to the convention.

On numerous occasions the delegates rewrote resolutions on the floor—each time in the direction of asserting rank-and-file control against the leadership or of sharpening criticism of the manner in which Truman's programs were administered.

A proposed constitutional provision permitting the national leaders to name 30 percent of future convention delegates was changed to allow only 20 percent. Despite a warning that some top-flight labor leaders, such as David Dubinsky, did not have the time for work in a local ADA group, the convention insisted that all members-at-large hereafter must line up with local groups.

UMT stand. A resolution on Greece was revised to add a criticism that administration of the "so-called Truman Doctrine" thus far has not sufficiently encouraged Greek democratic elements or discouraged Athens militarists and reactionaries. Tentative approval of a future Universal Military Training program, if "necessary," was knocked out on the convention floor, despite a remarkable endorsement of UMT by Mrs. Roosevelt, who was earlier referred to in the convention as the ADA's "moving spirit."

Some ADA people have been kicking around the idea that the organization may eventually become comparable to the Fabian Society. The Fabians, however, had a specific intellectual idea—the goal of socialism to be achieved by peaceful change. It is not yet clear that the ADA possesses any such guiding principle.

Many of its nationally known young leaders—Wyatt, Porter, Humphrey—seem more interested in political futures than in performing the latter-day functions of Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Other ADA members are neither Socialists in principle nor committed to native American progressive objectives—the TVA type of "yardstick" plants in basic industries such as steel, and joint labor-management committees on price, production and technological policies in mass-production industries.

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HENRY WALLACE'S COLUMN

Conspiracy Against Housing

MANY OF THE LETTERS I received after announcing my candidacy joined me in condemning the partnership of the two old parties in leading the country to war, but many of these same people tried to draw a distinction between the parties on domestic issues. They should have seen the heated letters from war veterans expressing their genuine wrath at our national failure to meet the housing crisis. No single issue dramatizes more clearly the bipartisan approach to domestic problems.

More than two million married veterans are without accommodations of their own, living doubled up with relatives or friends, raising their families in furnished rooms, trailers or other makeshift dwellings.

Over three million American families are without homes of their own; eleven million urban American homes are so substandard they must be replaced; one-third of our rural dwellings are in need of major repairs and half of these are beyond salvage.

The figures today represent no improvement over the situation of two years ago, yet there is no indication that either the Administration or Congress plans any action to meet a crisis which has the most profound effect on the welfare of our country.

Four years ago, in projecting 60 million postwar jobs, I estimated that we should have three million jobs in the construction industry. Today there are only half that number in the industry, though we have almost 60 million employed. Men who should be employed in building homes are working in our "war" industries.

It is not unjust to charge that there has been bipartisan collusion to scuttle housing programs. The major housing bill pending before Congress bears the names of the Republican leader on domestic policy in the Senate, Taft, and the names of two Democrats, Senators Wagner and Ellender. The full pressure of the Administration would force Taft to abandon his use of the housing bill to blackmail the people into electing a Republican President. Taft has said he prefers to hold social-welfare legislation until there is a Republican in the White House. Truman has not exposed this tactic and the Administration's record on housing indicates that it is equally guilty.

Only 60 days after V-J Day, the President, despite the desperate shortage of building materials, ended building controls because, according to John W. Snyder, then head of War Mobilization, "the law of supply and demand would control." Construction immediately surged ahead. Not the building of homes—but commercial construction, including race tracks, night clubs and bowling alleys. Building costs soared.

Ninety days later the Administration was forced to reinstate building controls, but the damage had been done, and even this reprieve was short-lived.

Early in 1946, real-estate interests opened an attack on Wilson W. Wyatt, the new Housing Administrator, who was trying to do something for veterans and others without homes. In October, the President met with Wyatt and pledged continued housing controls. In December, Truman removed all housing controls. Wyatt resigned.

Meanwhile, a coalition of Democrats and Republicans emasculated and stalled the operation of the Veterans' Emergency Housing Act by delaying the appropriation of funds for the subsidies called for in the law.

I think it is important to note that during this period, the Democratic Party had full control of both houses of Congress.

Two Congresses, Democratic and Republican, have brought forth converted barracks and Quonset huts as an answer to the needs of our veterans and their families.

During the war, when today's homeless veterans were fighting for our nation's life, there was enormous need for munitions, planes, guns, ships, barracks and the many other things which were necessary for victory. These needs were met promptly and in full.

It is obvious that a nation which can produce so abundantly for war can meet its peacetime needs, if its government wants to.

The government must accept its basic responsibility that every American have a decent home, in a decent community, at a price he can pay.

The private building industry has failed miserably to provide the American people with shelter in proper quantity, quality and price.

Therefore, the government must accept the responsibility. We must initiate a program to build a minimum of 4.5 million homes in the next three years to take care of the immediate and emergency needs of the American people.

The first step in such a program is the extension and strengthening of rent control. All housing, new and old, permanent and transient, must be placed under rent control. Rents that were decontrolled under the present ineffective law should be rolled back to the levels of June 30, 1947. Ceilings must be placed on the sale of all newly constructed homes.

Price controls and a priority system of allotments must be placed over all building materials.

Non-essential construction must be banned for the duration of the emergency. Homeless veterans must be given top priorities.

Restrictive covenants must be banned.

(Continued on page 30)

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STALLED IN THE LOBBY

The T-E-W public housing bill is blocked in Congress by real-estate interests, party politics and Senator Taft's presidential ambitions

by Helen Fuller

THE ONLY BILL before Congress which would provide decent housing at reasonable prices has been effectively blocked by real-estate interests for almost three years. The Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill would provide public, low-cost housing to meet the crying need of low-income families for houses they can afford. It would expand opportunities for private construction and help cut exorbitant costs by providing cheap financing on liberal terms. It would remove land-law obstacles and provide for research into new materials and techniques.

In spite of the abundant evidence that the T-E-W bill is essential both to bring down prices of homes now being built and to guarantee an adequate supply in the future, the Republican leadership refuses to let Congress vote on the measure. There is too good a chance that it would pass. Chairman Jesse Wolcott (Mich.) has the bill tightly bottled up in the House Banking and Currency Committee, and Senator Taft, although he is one of the authors, has not dared bring it to the floor in the face of his party's opposition.

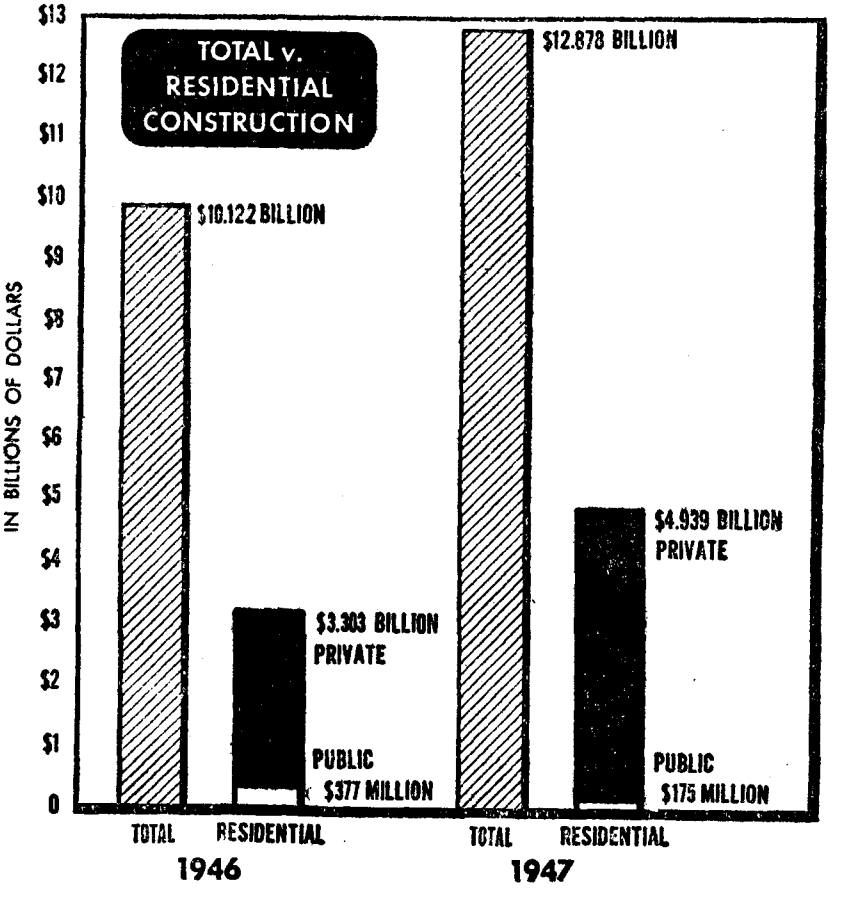
When Senators Wagner, Ellender and Taft first introduced their long-range plan, in November, 1945, the Democrats controlled Congress. To kill it in the closing hours of that session, the Republicans had to resort to ancient parliamentary devices and rely heavily on the help of the Southern Democrats. Joe Martin (R, Mass.), then Minority Leader, admitted that had it come to the floor, the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill would certainly have passed. The real-estate lobby took warning from this narrow squeak and started streamlining their already impressive organization.

Real-estate operators have seldom been rational about government housing programs. They have screamed about "socialism" and "unfair government competition" since the earliest public housing efforts of the New Deal. Wartime construction and rent controls stimulated them to form bigger and stronger lobbies for their "defense."

So when the postwar housing program came along, the real-estate men were ready for what they considered to be the fight for their lives. Arthur W. Binns, president of the National Home and Property Owners' Foundation, speaks for all the housing lobbies when he says of the T-E-W bill: "Actually the issue is not between public and private housing—it is drawn, and very sharply drawn, between public enterprise and private enterprise. This is the last beachhead. If the government now takes over the housing of the nation under a bill which provides at the beginning twice as much public housing as we had prior to Pearl Harbor, we have started down a path which can only lead to the nationalization of all property. Certainly the veterans do not wish to live in charity housing. Public housing is not necessary or desirable for veterans."

President Truman has publicly blasted the real-estate lobby for its "brazen operations to block programs so essential to the needs of our citizens." And the Department of Justice has cited the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) for violation of the anti-trust laws. But private housing today maintains one of the largest and highest-paid Washington staffs of any industrial group, largely to fight the T-E-W.

The key men are: Binns; Herbert U. Nelson, representing NAREB; Frank W. Cortright, representing the construction men in the National Association of Home Builders; and Morton Bodfish, representing the mortgage



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bankers through the US Savings and Loan League. Bodfish and Nelson have long excelled at social lobbying. Now a national group called the Realtors' Washington Committee has been set up, with Walter S. Dayton, a Bayside, New York, operator, as chairman, to help out in this essential work. They are trying to raise an extra $80,000 above their regular budget to meet the high cost of Washington party-giving.

Speak softly. In the past, Nelson, Bodfish and Cortright have been known around the Capital as masters of strong-arm lobbying tactics. Now the boards of these real-estate men's organizations are said to be deploring such old-fashioned methods, insisting that subtler social pressures are to be preferred. The real lobbying job is being done these days from the congressmen's home towns by substantial citizens who are also campaign-fund contributors and property owners—or perhaps real-estate-board members.

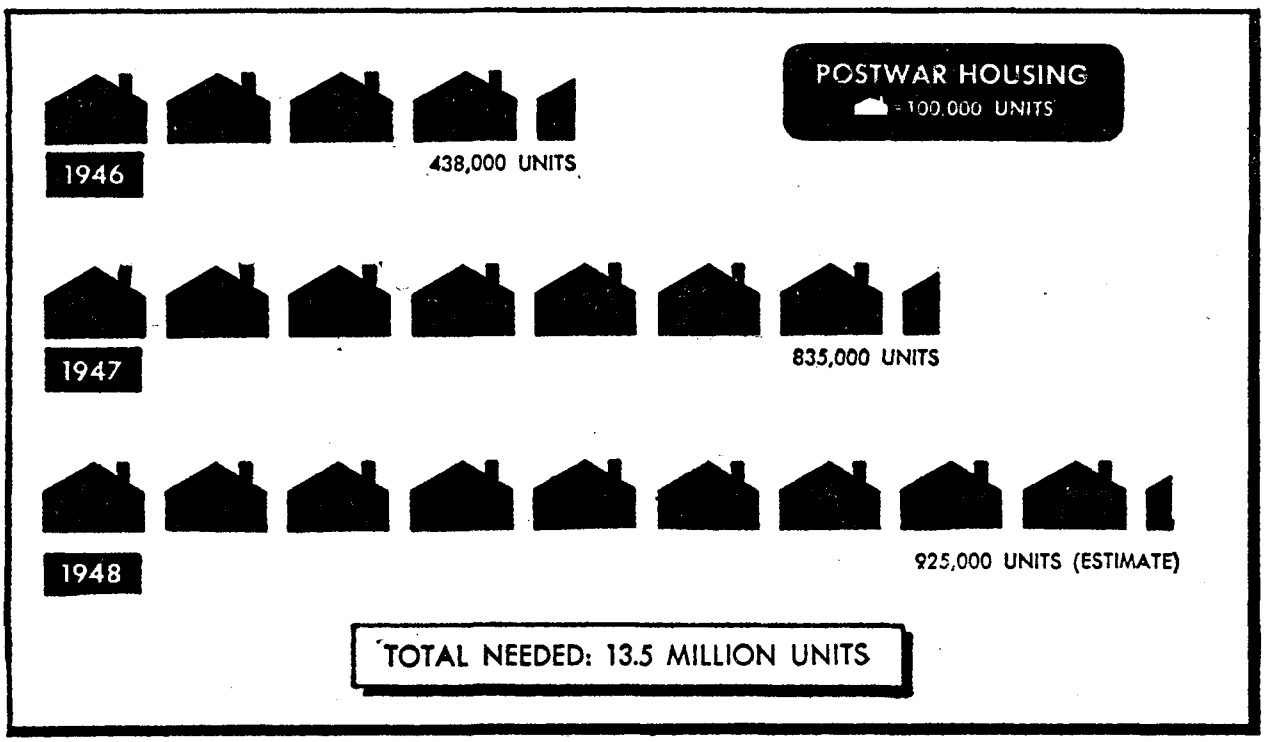
The Home and Property Owners' Foundation was an attempt to formalize this kind of approach. Nelson and Binns set out to build the first home owners' protective association about two years ago. Their immediate objective was to stir up the 20 million American home owners to the "dangers" of government bureaucracy and socialized housing. They would turn this indignation on Congress—and if it worked for housing, it might later be used to fight other "evils" too. Under its new policy of subtlety, the NAREB board has disowned the Foundation it helped create. But Binns and company are working harder than ever to influence Congress in their own way.

All this hard work, perseverance and careful contributing to campaign funds is paying off well in the present Congress. When supporters of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill, disgusted with delay, proposed another investigation of the need for housing last summer, the real-estate lobby's great favorites, Representative Ralph Gamble (R, N. Y.) and Senator Joe McCarthy (R, Wis.), became chairman and vice-chairman of the joint investigating committee. And four more good friends of the real-estate men—Senator Harry P. Cain (R, Wash.) and Representatives Rolla C. McMillen (R, Ill.), Frank L. Sundstrom (R, N. J.) and Charles K. Fletcher (R, Calif.)—were appointed to the committee.

For the last six months, the joint committee has junketed around the country holding hearings in almost every major city. Witnesses who spoke in favor of public housing were uniformly sat upon by the chairman and unfriendly members.

Blame the Reds. Chairman Gamble's report on what he had learned during the trip set forth that "Comment on public housing would be incomplete without reference to the fact that, in city after city, Communists were boisterous in the advocacy of more and more public housing." Now the joint committee is preparing its final report, which is supposed to set the pattern for the housing legislation the Republican leadership will finally ask this Congress to pass. Senators Tobey, Flanders, Wagner, Taylor and Representative Wright Patman (D, Tex.) will do their best inside the committee to make the report follow the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill as closely as possible.

But Senator McCarthy has already drafted a bill of his own which he expects will get Republican blessing, regardless of what the joint committee advises. Representative Gamble will sponsor the McCarthy measure in the House, and the all-powerful Represen-



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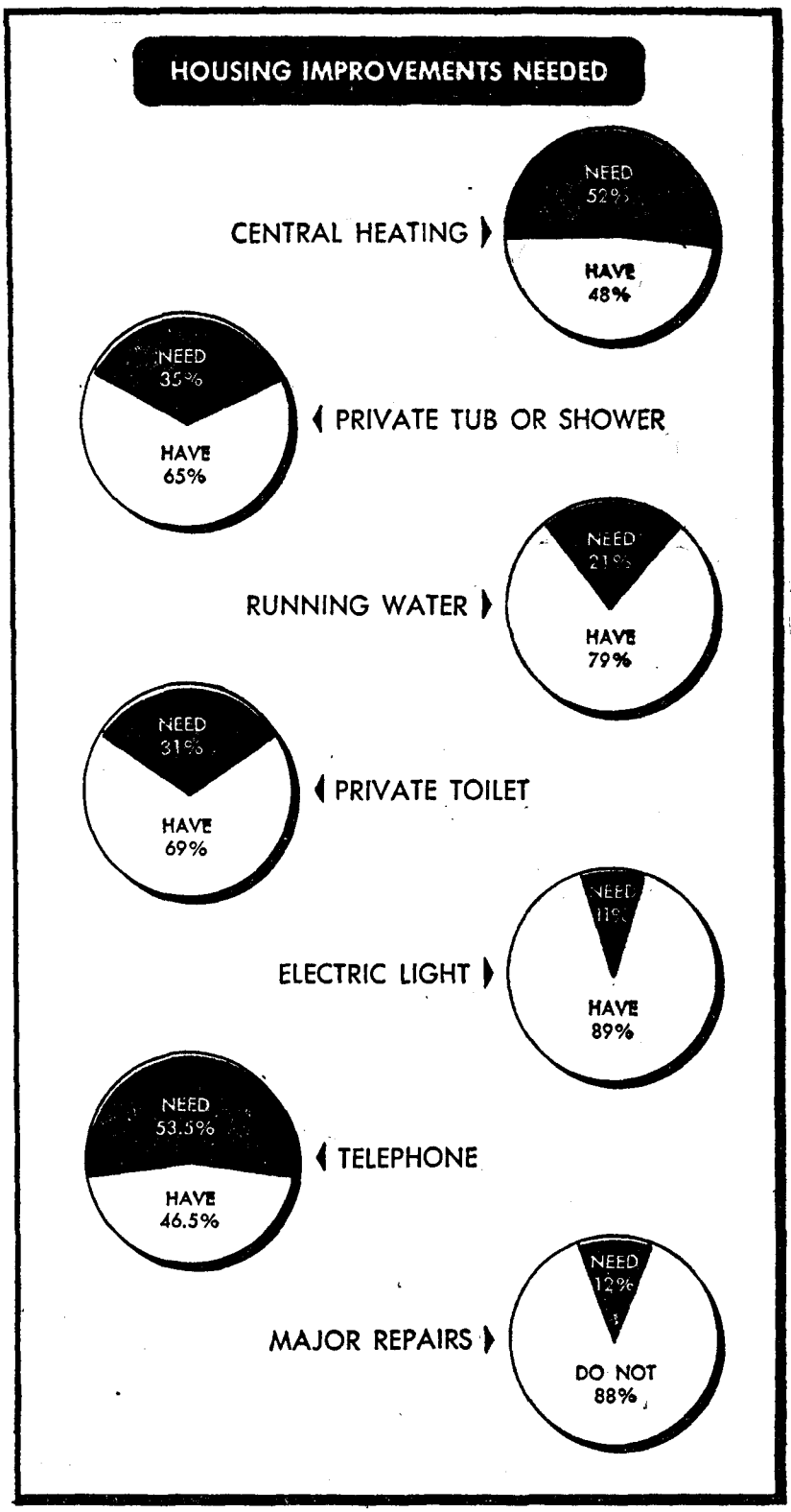
tative Wolcott is expected to go along with it too. Those who have seen the McCarthy bill say that it will make no provision for public housing at all. McCarthy says that if Congress should, by any chance, consider public housing as a separate matter, it ought to require local and state contributions of from one-third to one-half of the total cost. Wolcott says privately that he would insist on this new ratio.

No local funds. In effect, any such action would stop public housing dead in almost every community in the country, even though it did put "public housing legislation" on the statute books in an election year. Replies to a recent questionnaire sent out to city officials by Senator Wagner show that while 90 percent of all the mayors and commissioners favor additional low-cost housing, almost none report that their cities could, because of regulations governing bonded indebtedness, contribute more to such projects than they have done under the Federal Public Housing Administration formula in the past.

The McCarthy bill is said to encourage greater private construction by means of a system of yield insurance to guarantee builders a fair profit on their investment and special income-tax considerations. He would transfer veterans'-housing functions from the Veterans' Administration to the banker-minded Federal Housing Administration. His bill would carry urban development and slum-clearance provisions based strictly on the principle of public works to which both the federal government and state and local agencies contribute—and scheduled to be carried out only when public works are needed to bolster the economy.

Although Senator Taft is known to feel the need for some changes in the present T-E-W bill, he is not expected to back the McCarthy plan. No one who has worked with Taft doubts his sincere belief in the principles of the T-E-W or believes he will give underhand support to McCarthy. Taft's problem is to obtain passage of the kind of housing measure he wants, with more Republicans than Democrats voting for it. If he brought the present bill, which has been favorably reported by the Senate Banking Committee, onto the floor, it might pass. Such passage would certainly be by a large block of Democratic and a handful of Republican votes. And that would be an embarrassing way for a Republican candidate to whittle out a plank for his platform. Taft is casting about for just the right amendments to the present bill to win enough extra Republican support to make it respectable.

The problem in the House is much more difficult. Chairman Wolcott has contended that rent controls were the



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real cause of the housing shortage, and he now says that if there is still a shortage of houses to rent by March 1, "we shall give consideration to the continuance of rent controls" again. He says that he is waiting for the report of the Joint Housing Committee to lay down a definitive policy on federal *v.* state responsibility for public housing before recommending any legislation to the full House.

Those who are sure that the clever and resourceful Wolcott will never report a public housing measure if he can avoid it, are now planning a drive for the necessary 218 signatures to the petition introduced by Representative Helen Gahagan Douglas (D, Calif.) to discharge the bill from committee without further delay. They are counting on the Veterans' Housing Conference in Washington, February 29-March 1, to dramatize the urgent need for action. Among the big veterans' groups, only the American Legion, which has an alternative homestead bill of its own drafted by real-estate-board Legionnaires, will be absent from the Washington rally.

Long-term job. Passage of the T-E-W bill would not bring the housing millennium. Actually, few if any more houses would be built in the first year it was in operation. But housing prices would probably start declining quickly. Some such plan as that offered in the Taylor-Douglas bill would be needed to deliver a much greater quantity of rental housing in a hurry.

Last year less than 15 percent of the houses built were for rent—only about 50,000 new homes in all. Senator Flanders reports selling prices of homes are now 130 percent above the 1939 level: a house that sold for $6,500 in 1940 is now selling for $15,000. It will take the kind of machinery provided under the T-E-W measure to bring housing prices into line and assure a permanent adequate supply.

Passage of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill is the first step to housing progress. But the question remains: which is stronger with the 80th Congress, the need or the lobby?

Horse-and-Buggy Housing

by Jean Begeman

HOW LONG will the American landlord continue as cock o' the walk? To today's harried tenants, guided by the sheer instinct for self-preservation to bow three times while passing his premises, it looked like a lifetime.

To landlords—who consider themselves an oppressed class even while haughtily accepting $500 bribes—it looked like a long, luscious grazing among the green. To housing experts in Washington, the seventies seemed the likeliest decade in which the US householder could recover his pride and face his landlord on something like equal terms.

Right now, in the third postwar year of the housing crisis, the building trade hasn't even begun to approximate the staggering total of housing required by the American people. The 835,000 new dwellings put up in 1947—most of them in luxury-price brackets—offer very slim pickings to the three million families now seeking homes. In addition, half a million new families are being added each year to the list of those needing decent shelter. Most of them couldn't afford present prices even if the homes were available. While workers in manufacturing industries, for example, are making wages about 15 percent above the 1945 scale, they find that construction costs have risen 38 percent in the last year.

To meet the challenge of unhoused millions, the nation's builders will have to put up at least 1.5 million low-cost homes a year for the next decade.

The housing industry has never managed to keep pace with changes in our industrial system. Home building has remained an essentially small-time operation. About 30,000 separate items of material, ranging from nails to steel beams, go into the construction of an average house. More than 400 separate steps and at least 25 trades or special skills are involved. An additional complicating factor is the system of procuring materials which are purchased from retailers, who are supplied by jobbers, who in turn are supplied by manufacturers. Builders estimate that canalization through middlemen ups the cost between 25 and 50 percent.

One of the biggest US housing operators is Levitt and Sons of New York, who last year hammered together 3,000 houses with an estimated sales value of $24 million. In the same year General Motors ran off their assembly lines some 1.5 million cars for which consumers would pay about $2 billion.

Shake-up needed. Before America gets more and better housing, the building trades will probably have to revise their ancient, middleman-ridden handicrafts tradition for a new and streamlined system of mass production. Until then, or until the federal government steps in with adequate programs for public housing, the American family can't hope for cheap and efficiently built homes.

WHY WORKERS CAN'T HAVE HOUSES

100 = 1945

	Cost of Residential Construction	Cost of Living	Average Weekly Earnings
1945	100	100	100
1946	110.7	108.5	101.1
1947 (through September)	137.9	127.6	114.7

Even in 1945, the average worker could not afford to buy or build a house. The above figures indicate that the situation is still worse today.

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HOUSES FOR SALE

Available and cheap, these prefabricated homes are up against special interests, out-of-date building codes, and local snobbishness

by Donald W. Craig

"I'm lookin' for a home—just lookin' for a home . . ." sang the dispossessed boll weevil. Today, some three million US families are singing the same tune. The rosy promises of the wartime advertisements—a cozy cottage complete with tile bath, refrigerator, washing machine and other gadgets—were long ago flushed down leaky drains, and about 300,000 families are living in hotels, tourist camps, trailer parks and converted barracks.

One of the hopes of the postwar dreamworld was the prefabricated home, cheap and easily put up. By the end of 1946, nearly 300 companies were planning to make prefabs. The industry ran into materials shortages, opposition from conventional real-estate interests, outmoded building codes, and obstructionism from both industry and labor in the building trades.

Today, prefabs are coming off the assembly lines only in small trickles. Last year the 70 to 80 manufacturers in the industry turned out about 37,500 units. Despite expert prefab design, machine precision, decreased labor costs, rotproof plywood and standardized parts—factors which their manufacturers believe could make mass-produced prefabs 20 percent cheaper than comparable houses built by old-fashioned methods—the new industry is hard hit by the 2,000 antiquated local building codes which keep prefabs out of built-up areas. The New Republic *here presents the findings of a correspondent who investigated the prefabricated-housing situation in an area near New York City.*

IN A STORAGE YARD in East St. Louis, Missouri, stands a tiny but efficient prefabricated house. Not much bigger than an oversized trailer, it nevertheless has sleeping space for four, a living room-kitchenette, a bathroom, water heater, stove, refrigerator, built-in chests of drawers, and complete plumbing. It costs $2,690 f.o.b. St. Louis.

A young veteran named Daniel Gregg wants that house badly. He lives now with his wife, parents, two brothers and a sister in a six-room dwelling in Clifton, New Jersey. During the past year he has applied for admittance to half a dozen housing projects, without success. Gregg has the money to pay for the house in St. Louis. The Goodyear Wingfoot company, which produced it, wants to sell it to him. So does Samuel Feldman, the Paterson merchant who is an Eastern distributor for Wingfoot Homes, Inc. But the deal is impossible.

The impossibility was demonstrated two weeks ago in the office of Jacob Kulick, building inspector of Clifton. Gregg and his wife went in to ask about putting up the Wingfoot house in Clifton. Kulick, an elderly German-American with 31 years as building inspector behind him, got out his frayed building-code booklet.

"It says you got to have corner posts 4x6 inches," he said. "Does this house of yours have corner posts 4x6? No. The book says foundations 10 inches wide for story-and-a-half dwellings. On your blueprint, the foundations are eight inches. It doesn't fit the regulations."

He waved his hand in dismissal. Gregg argued for the better part of an hour. But Kulick was adamant.

"I tell you," he repeated periodically, "even if the rules permitted it, you'd do better to get a good builder to put up a house for you."

Gregg had looked into the cost of builders' houses. He knew how much money he made each week. The two figures didn't mesh.

"Look, Mr. Kulick," he pleaded. "I know this house doesn't fit the building code. Isn't there some way we could get around the code?"

Kulick shook his head dubiously. "You could petition the City Council," he said. "But I don't think they'd pass it. Maybe a couple of years ago, when there was no lumber in the local yards. But now, when there's plenty of lumber—not a chance. I tell you true, you should build a real house."

"Aren't there any prefabricated houses in Clifton?" Gregg asked as he got up to go.

"Not a one," said Kulick firmly. "We got a lot of people in asking about them, like you. But they never come back."

The Greggs will probably not go back, either. A few minutes of the Kulick treatment is enough to knock the props from under anybody's dreams. The Greggs will go on living in their one room in the family house; after a year or two a lucky break may land them in a converted Army barracks with others of the countless thousands of America's displaced persons.

The Goodyear Wingfoot company (a subsidiary of Goodyear Tire and Rubber) can deliver in 10 days. It has promised distributor Feldman 2,500 units within a year of the time he can get a go-ahead signal. The house is erected at the plant and is small enough to fit on a flat car or trailer truck. It does not have to wait for nails, glass, plaster or soil pipe to squeeze through the bottlenecks of commerce—nor for unions to settle their differences with one another or with their contractors.

Available—but. Many persons who know the Wingfoot or other low-cost, factory-built homes might claim that the Greggs are just as well off without one. But that is basically for the Greggs to decide. What counts with them, and with the 800 other families

Donald W. Craig, who has written several articles for the New Republic *in the past year, is now free-lancing.*

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in the New York area who have seen a Wingfoot on display in Mountain View, New Jersey (whose regulations prevent its being built for use), is that the house is available.

To the families living in attics, cold-water flats and furnished rooms, this means more than large bedrooms and peaked roofs. The house is at least as good as a $100-a-month apartment in New York; it is cheap; it can be delivered. But in thousands of communities it can't be put up and lived in.

Today's bugaboo. All over the country, building codes like those of Clifton block the marketing of low-cost, factory-built housing. A spot check of a dozen towns and cities in the north Jersey area shows that Dan Gregg would have difficulty erecting the house he wants anywhere within reach of the textile-printing plant that employs him.

In Paterson, for instance, studs must be 2x4 inches, corner posts 4x6. In Wayne Township, joists must be a minimum of 2x6 inches. In Pompton Lakes, living rooms must cover a minimum area of 180 square feet. Hackensack demands 4x6 sills. In Englewood, bedrooms with less than eight feet of headroom are taboo. Ridgewood insists upon a firestop in the walls halfway up from floor to ceiling. New York City permits nothing but fireproof construction.

The Wingfoot house, like several other low-cost prefabs, fulfills none of these requirements. Built by war-developed engineering methods that emphasize strength and efficiency rather than bulk, it can withstand as much stress and strain as old-style houses, and more. But most American building codes, drawn up in separate communities 15 to 25 years ago, deal with sizes and measurements, not with performance. A comparable set of regulations for metal structures would outlaw steel, aluminum and the new alloys in favor of cast iron.

Today's building codes are the bugaboo of those who want to beat high building costs with new materials and assembly-line methods. Yet they are not insurmountable barriers in themselves. They can be revised, and in most sizable towns appeals from them can be made to some high municipal body. Behind them, however, is a complex of ignorance, economic fear, unbalanced taxation systems and social mores which are as important impediments to home building as high prices and materials shortages. Actually, the clash of building codes with low-priced prefabricated housing is simply another instalment in the old serial story of special interests.

The promotion of Wingfoot Homes in north Jersey ran afoul of an assortment of such interests. Among these were the building inspectors themselves, municipal administrators and politicians, the building trades, and what may be called snob interests.

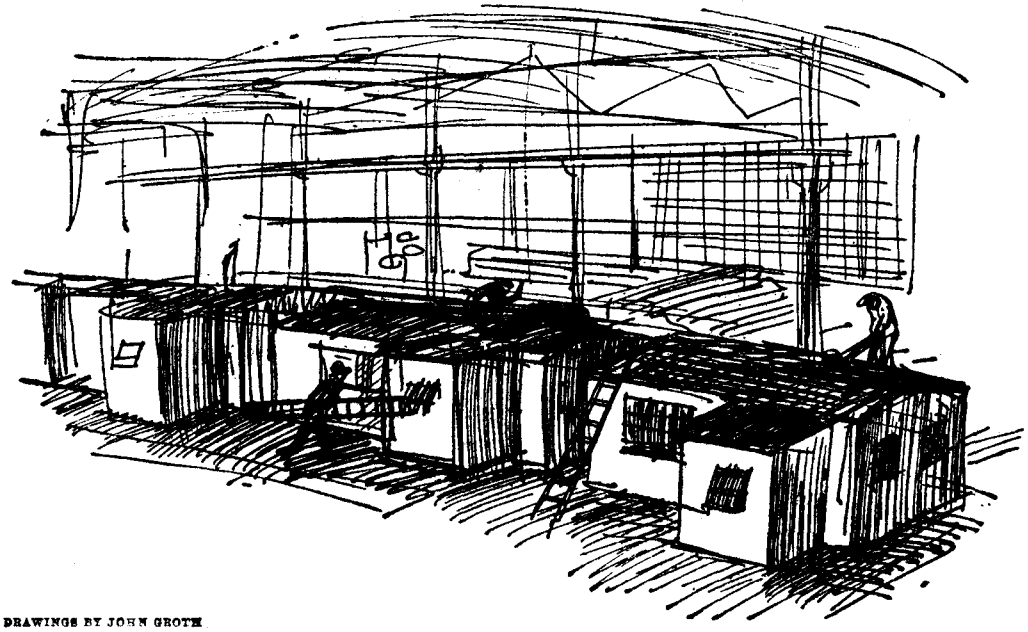
"We don't want no prefabs in our town," said one building inspector, "and we're not goin' to let none in." This gentleman is typical of the inspectors of most small towns and some big ones. Ex-carpenters or contractors who have been politically lucky, they know the types of building they did themselves and little else. The great majority of them have no acquaintance with modern construction engineering. They do know local contractors and master carpenters, however, and they can generally be depended on to put in a plug for their friends.

A sad mayor. Over them are sometimes higher individuals or civic bodies which can pass on special applications. In Paterson there is the Bureau of Standards and Appeals. The chairman of this bureau is a bank vice-president, and its membership consists of an architect, an industrial contractor, a manufacturer and the fire chief.

"They are leading men in the community," explained Mayor Michael U. Da Vita. "But they're old-timers, and it's hard to budge them. Recently they knocked out a big garden-type apartment-house project we needed very much, because it was frame and not fireproof masonry. Fireproofing was too expensive, and the project had to be dropped.

"Personally," said the Mayor sadly, "I'd rather live in a non-fireproof home than in none at all. I want to build a house myself, but right now I'm afraid to start because of building costs."

The attitude of many municipal administrations was expressed by the city father who said to Feldman: "You know, we don't really give a damn about the veteran. What we're interested in is the long green."



DRAWINGS BY JOHN GROTH

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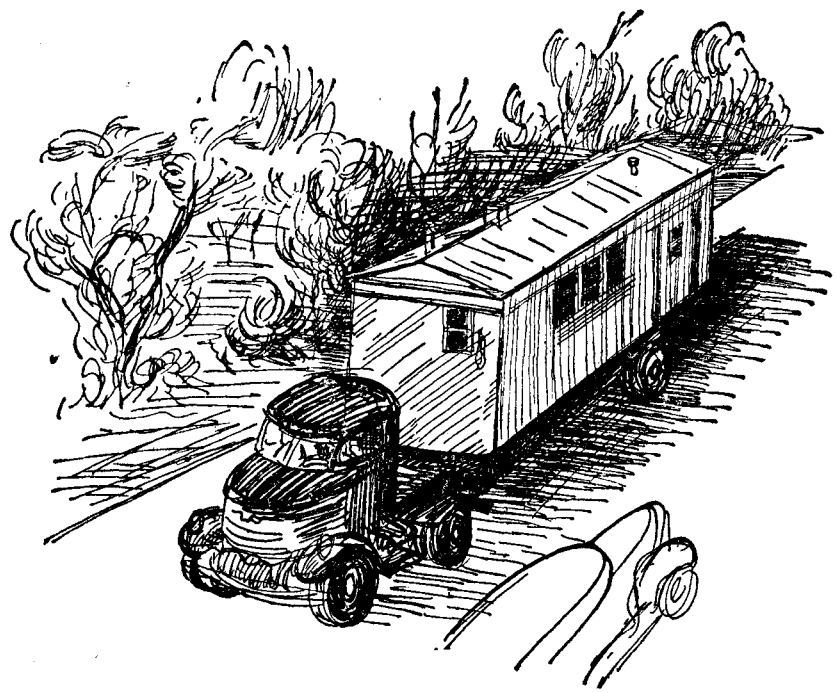
Such direct self-interest was not exhibited so obviously in most of the public servants with whom Feldman tried to do business. But with most of them the financial interest of the community weighed more heavily than the needs of homeless families.

The financial interest arises from the fact that community services are supported largely by taxes on property. One child going to school from a Wingfoot house, which might pay $80 in taxes, costs the community perhaps $150. And there are the expenses of police and fire protection, street cleaning, political salaries, etc. In the town of Wyckoff the mayor told Feldman bluntly, "The average home here is valued at $15,000. We have no housing problem and we don't want any cheap housing around." Hoboken turned down Feldman's request for a building permit with the statement that vertical construction paying high taxes was all the city could afford.

The hostility of the building trades to factory-built housing is based on the obvious fear that such construction will deprive their members of work and wages. The fact that the Wingfoot units are prefabricated by members of a dozen AFL unions in St. Louis does not mollify the New Jersey AFL workers, who see in them a threat to their present prosperity. President Sal Maso of the New Jersey Building and Construction Trades Council would not come out and say that his unions would sabotage neighbor Feldman's houses. But he did give up 20 minutes to vigorous disparagement of any and all low-priced prefabricated units as compared with houses constructed on the site.

Snob interests. The employers in this field feel equally with their men that prefabricated houses are an opposition "racket." A potential purchaser of a prefab stands little chance at their hands. One building inspector reported that he had had an application for a prefab permit a few weeks ago, but that a local contractor had sat with the applicant for four hours one evening and had finally convinced him that the old way was best.



Perhaps the most potent enemies of low-cost private housing of any kind are the individuals and groups who see in the proximity of such housing to their own property an impairment of prestige, or an impairment in the dollar value of their holdings as measured in terms of social standing.

The size of the living rooms in Pompton Lakes is an example of this force at work. In Wyckoff a zoning law requires a minimum lot size of 150x200 feet. In Cedar Grove the peak of one's roof must be at least 21 feet above the ground. As for Englewood, a city ordinance provides that the building inspector shall not issue a permit unless the house accords generally with other houses in the neighborhood.

"And of course," explained Englewood's building inspector Francis Moon, "if the neighbors kick, we couldn't do much about it."

Some Philadelphia stories which have come to hand illustrate how this species of interest finds weapons everywhere to suit its needs. In several suburbs of that City of Friends, houses must have full basements to be acceptable. A group of Ridley Park citizens last year opposed a vets' coöperative-housing project with the argument that its one-story bungalows did not belong beside their story-and-a-half bungalows erected ten years before for considerably less money.

And in Philadelphia itself, City Councilman Clarence K. Crossan introduced a resolution a few weeks ago to prohibit the erection of steel prefabricated houses in certain wards where prevailing new construction favors single dwellings constructed on the site. His arguments were that prefabs might depreciate the value of homes recently bought in those areas at inflated prices; and would keep down the prices of future homes.

Willing but unable. Whatever the justification for these and other forces like them, they inevitably run counter to the interests of the average man seeking a home, whether that man fought the war in Bataan or in Perth Amboy. The National Association of Building Inspectors is developing a revised building code, which will recognize prefabricated structures and which may be adopted widely. Until then, Dan Gregg will probably continue to live in crowded and submarginal conditions. So will most of the estimated three million other young American couples who would like and can afford—but can't find—homes of their own.

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HAVANA EXPECTS A U.S. BUST

HAVANA (by airmail)

DELEGATES from 59 nations who have been meeting in Havana during the past four months argue that the establishment of even the most limited kind of order in international trade relations is preferable to the prewar state of worldwide economic warfare. Consequently, they are hard at work drawing up a charter for an International Trade Organization, designed to become a specialized agency under the United Nations.

Despite their agreement on goals, delegates from the other nations of the world are hedging on trade policies because of the basic fear which dominates the conference. This fear, the most striking fact to an American observer, is the certainty among most delegates that the United States is headed straight for an economic crisis. To them, the only questions are: when will the US bust come, and what can their nations save from the wreckage?

A century behind. The United States, sponsor and chief author of the charter now under debate, has emphasized tariff reductions, trade agreements and regulations which would give US products a wide and lucrative foreign sale. Less industrialized countries want the emphasis put on economic development and stability. They also point out that little can be done without guaranteed full employment everywhere, not exactly a policy of the 80th Congress. To these groups—clearly in the majority at Havana—the charter appears as an extension of nineteenth-century free enterprise, unrealistic in terms of postwar economic chaos and controlled economies.

There is also a feeling that the US is more interested in furthering its own foreign economic and political aims rather than in raising general world living standards. William L. Clayton's opening speech to the conference presented the ITO as a long-range follow-up to the Marshall Plan. Most small nations, especially the

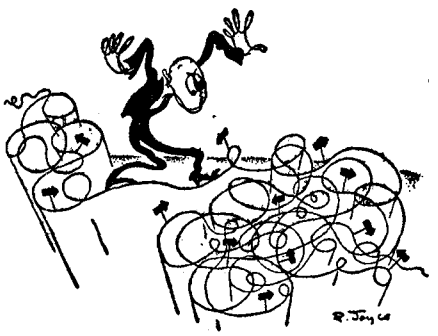
by Jane Bedell

Latin American countries, took Clayton's statement as an indication of US imperialism. Their delegates feel that a US depression will mean heightened economic domination of their countries by an America desperately trying to save her markets.

The small, undeveloped countries want an ITO charter that will protect their young industries against US competition. The want, for instance, to shut off textile imports from the US once they decide to build a textile industry of their own. They also want to be able to shut off such imports before speculators have a chance to profit at their expense. Furthermore, they want to make special trading arrangements for building regional industries.

Soviet shadow. Other countries are equally active in opposing certain aspects of US policy. Australia led the fight to incorporate full-employment recommendations into the draft charter in its early stages. The US agreed, but when Australia pressed the US to accept definite responsibility for increasing its imports, the answer was a flat "no." Australia's most important exports are wheat and wool, products peculiarly sensitive to world price changes. In order to protect herself, Australia sought and won a clause which releases her from many charter obligations whenever her exports fall off sharply.

It is significant that strong opposition to the US has developed from countries on the friendly side of the iron curtain. Many of the arguments



previously raised by the Soviet Union are finding general support, even though Russia herself was conspicuously absent from the conference.

Few delegates expect the Soviet Union to join the ITO. They point out that the organization is heavily loaded in favor of industrialized nations. In such a setup, the Soviet Union, which exports raw materials and agricultural products, has more to lose than to gain. In any case, Russia will undoubtedly receive whatever benefits result, since the ITO probably will have to permit its members to give the Soviet Union favored treatment in order to keep such countries as Poland and Czechoslovakia in the organization.

Politically, Russia has much to gain by staying outside the ITO. As long as she is not a member, she can oppose US reticence on full-employment and economic-development policies. Also, Russia can be expected to argue that the whole concept of the ITO is out of date. As one delegate admitted, "The main provisions of the charter are based on nineteenth-century concepts of free trade. But free trade originally went with free immigration and free movement of capital. The application of only one of these . . . concepts to a twentieth-century situation will probably prove unworkable."

No united front. Despite such sharp attacks, it would be unfair to imply that the Havana conference has presented a united front against US economic policies. There is real need for order in world trade, just as in world health, world food, world finances, all organized under specialized United Nations organizations already in existence. Most delegates are willing to take the best they can get in Havana in the hope that policies will be revised if the situation changes and the US bust comes. Political strategy and immediate material needs are too important to permit countries such as France and Britain to voice their doubts, even when they exist.

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FOREIGN PRESS: What Are They Thinking?

HOWARD FAST'S BOOK, *Freedom Road,* has been enjoying a smashing success as a serial in the Berlin daily, *Vorwarts*—needless to say, a Russian-licensed paper. Reader response to Fast's writing included many letters asking for recommendations of other examples of "progressive American literature."

Vorwärts

The *Vorwarts* literary editor's reply might cause a certain amount of squirming in the seats of the literary mighty in America. Here are his recommendations: Theodore Dreiser, "first great master of American realism"; Upton Sinclair, in whom "progressive tendencies found their first successful propagandist"; Erskine Caldwell, "powerful critic of modern society"; John Steinbeck's "documents proving the decay of capitalism"; Thomas Wolfe's "epics of the American nation"; Ernest Hemingway, who "developed the novel into a work of art"; and William Faulkner, "a reactionary—but whose artistic qualities cannot be denied."

The choice bit, however, concerns John Dos Passos, whose recent efforts in the Luce publications have apparently escaped the attention of the *Vorwarts* editor. He recommends: "John Dos Passos—who has made an earnest study of social developments, and has placed his hopes for a better world in Marxism."

Book burning. During his campaign to "reëducate" the German people, Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels decreed certain books unfit for the eyes of the Aryan super race. So, on May 10, 1933, the banned books were piled sky-high on the square in front of Berlin's State Opera House and set afire by Berlin's fast learning citizenry.

Now, fifteen years and one war later, the victorious Allies have started a campaign to "reëducate" the Germans. An order issued by British Military Government in Niedersachsen on January 20 decrees certain books unfit for the eyes of Germans—this time in the interest of Democracy.

NEUES DEUTSCHLAND

As the daily of the Socialist Unity Party, *Neues Deutschland,* is quick to point out, the British decree coincides with Goebbels' in banning the works of Marx and Engels.

But this time the Berlin citizenry is less coöperative, and there have been no bonfires. Instead, Berlin booksellers erect special and prominently displayed exhibits of the forbidden books in their stores. Large signs inform the customers that these are verboten.

From Greece come reports of similar doings. According to the Socialist Party organ, *I Machi,* a number of libraries were raided in Athens late in January, and many books, among them the works of Marx, were seized in a "special measure to combat communism."

Telegraf

Hitler may be safely ensconced in his own Valhalla, but the waves of human misery he set in motion continue to wash up their debris of wrecked lives.

As reported by the Berlin daily, *Telegraf,* when the Nuremberg racial laws went into effect in Germany, many Gentiles married to Jews helped their persecuted mates escape from Germany—often at the risk of their own lives. Some of the Jews who escaped eventually reached the US, and after the required number of years became American citizens.

At war's end, these new citizens set out to locate lost mates left in Germany. Many never did find them, and often those fortunate enough to discover their mates still alive and waiting learned that they were no longer married to them. The merciless racial laws had forced those left in Germany to save their livelihood, often their lives, by divorcing the absent Jewish partner.

Today, two years after war's end, these couples still cannot be reunited. According to US immigration laws, German citizens cannot come to the US unless they marry Americans—and only Americans who were in the armed forces may marry Germans.

Telegraf, however, reports a ray of hope in the recent decision of a Massachusetts judge, declaring one of those Hitler-enforced divorces illegal. Perhaps this will set a precedent.

Sign of the times. The dilemma of those in political opposition to existing regimes in the world today was neatly stated by ex-congressman of India's North Arcot District, C. V. Tajagopalachari. In a booklet relating his experiences while imprisoned in Vellore Jail, the Indian politico writes: "My trouble is that people outside the jails who can act, refuse to think. People inside the jails can think but cannot act."

EVA PUTNAM

SCARPELLI

THE ANTI-CLERICAL ROME WEEKLY *DON BASILIO* DEDICATES THE ABOVE CARTOON TO WHOEVER FIRES THE FIRST SHOT IN WORLD WAR III

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

MACDONALD'S WALLACE AND THE ONE I KNOW

by Russell Lord

To HAVE KNOWN and worked with Henry A. Wallace in years just past adds quite a bit of range and variety to the present days of a quiet country dweller and agrarian writer. I meet so many excited people. Some see a halo around his head; I have never seen it. Others see red. Others, still willing to reason, ask questions that no one can answer with certainty. Some of these questions are posed so frequently, in all seriousness, that one inclines to develop stock responses to those who demand to be told, for instance, just how much love of peace and righteousness as weighted against personal hatred of Truman impel Wallace's words and actions in this campaign.

Disdain, and anger. If there is any personal hatred in Henry Wallace, I have never been able to find it. At various times, for the purposes of biography, I have tried my best to draw from him what would seem to be a perfectly natural expression of hatred for some antagonist or detractor. Nothing ever came of it; and I never felt that he was just being careful; the scorn or hatred simply isn't there. Disdain, perhaps; contempt would be too strong a word.

"The trouble with Rex [Tugwell] as a public man," Henry once told me, smiling, "is that he *exhibits* disdain."

Anger? Yes. Henry A. has what his Reverend grandfather, the famous "Uncle Henry" of Iowa, used to describe rather proudly as "the Wallace temper"; and it has always been something of a problem among the men of this family whether an outburst of righteous wrath was really righteous or just wrath.

Righteous wrath can be effective, on the speaking platform or off. In his salad days as Secretary of Agriculture I remember Wallace putting aside for a moment his prepared manuscript to denounce a sudden epidemic of commodity speculation: "A little, ill informed, small-minded public," he said, "returning like dogs to the vomit you quitted in 1929!" Or again, in closed conference, he suddenly stood with bent head to break off the argument of a most skilled pleader seeking legal booty, and said slowly: "Unless we learn to treat each other fairly, this country is going to smash." There was pain in every word of that sentence, but no hate. "Don't it beat hell?" said Paul Porter, another of his aides at the time. "He's a Christian!"

Reviewing the experience of having worked rather closely with Wallace in the New Deal's mad youth (1933-34), and trying to evaluate from outside the government the line of his growth and promise ten years later, I edited a book of his public papers, *Democracy Reborn* (Reynal and Hitchcock; 1944), and wrote in the Introduction:

> . . . He was rather an awesome man to work for at times, but always perfectly natural, friendly and charming, not in the least self-righteous. . . . He is devoid of literary vanity. He works too fast to have any time for that. Sometimes in a speech he will tackle a subject and leave the impression that he is trying to think in public; that he is asking his audience to help him think this thing through. But he makes plain what he means, as a rule, and the personal quirks in his style are warming to the discourse. . . .
>
> He is not a strict party man any more than he is a strict Episcopalian. He is simply a man constantly moving on against and through the barriers that divide mankind; and this, in ever expanding measure, has been the line of his life and growth in public affairs. . . . He has learned how to talk to the people, to all the people, to listen to what that aroused and to talk back, worldwide. His war against barriers of trade, creed, race, color, language and opportunity has gained in reach and effectiveness enormously. He has grown to be known deservedly the world over not only as a good man but as a great man.

Yes, these Wallaces are a continuing growth, profoundly simple, profoundly practical. Whether the present Henry will prove to be a practical politician, in the sense of nomination-getting and vote-getting, time alone and the surging changes of global war will tell. But it is certain that he will keep growing.

There is nothing here that I would change or modify, although I am well aware that such a view of Wallace is far more vehemently rejected and derided by most political writers and critics now than early in 1944. The expressed opposition to him in those days was designedly patronizing. Even Frank Kent, as Dwight Macdonald points out in the latest book on Wallace (*Henry Wallace: The Man and the Myth*; Vanguard, $2.50), here before me, took the general line that Wallace was a mystical, muddle-headed sort of Corn Belt oaf, but unquestionably sincere and honest. But it was Kent again, as I remember, who launched in the *Saturday Evening Post* in the fall of 1946 the sharply changed line which holds that Wallace is a conspirator against freedom and democracy, a coward and a sneak. Other commentators—notably Westbrook Pegler and Frank Waldrop—took up and followed this line ardently; and so now in turn does Dwight Macdonald, editor of *Politics*, through 181 pages of text, summarizing in closing:

> Throughout this book, it has been charged that Henry Wallace is fuzzy-minded to a degree unusual even in politicians; that he is constantly contradicting himself without ever admitting it; that in regard to his own public statements he is a trimmer, a hedger and a chronic reneger; and that he lacks the guts to stand up under pressure. . . .

Inquisitorial gusto. Reading his book, you see at once that Macdonald enjoys his work and is devoid of neither literary vanity nor virtuosity. The opening chapter is a whirlwind of tortuous invective. He picks the friendly com-

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ment from my biography of the Wallaces (*The Wallaces of Iowa*; Houghton Mifflin) that Henry could not take even tennis lightly, that he liked to win, and quotes eight lines from "Macbeth" to show that Wallace "wouldst not play false, and yet wouldst wrongly win." This argues "a split personality," at war within itself, "lumpish, depressed, weighted down by a sense of duty (or of guilt?)."

On page 23 Wallace is "comparable to Hitler," yet on page 24 is derided for lacking political "it"; on page 32 the Century of the Common Man and Henry Luce's American Century are described as not significantly different; on page 36 Wallace and LaGuardia are lumped together dogmatically as *liberal realpolitikers,* "unprincipled and effective." By page 46 Wallace is like Hoover, and by page 82 a "Stalinoid."

Those who see horns—red ones—on Wallace's head, pop out in an astonishing array from all points of the partisan spectrum, from the extreme and substantial Right to the once over-extreme and somewhat disillusioned Left. His publishers, in a jacket tag, describe Dwight Macdonald as writing "from the independent Left, which Mr. Wallace claims as his own."

I wouldn't know about that. When Macdonald came around to see me with his notebook at the Cosmos Club in Washington shortly after having interviewed Wallace in New York, I could easily understand why the two of them didn't get along. Macdonald conducts an interview as a sort of rigid ideological quiz; nothing so bores or depresses Henry Wallace.

Macdonald is quite an engaging talker, despite his intensity, and no doubt sincere; but it is downright astonishing how he can take plain answers to his questions and work them around to accord with his set of ideological preconceptions and code. His neatest trick in this line, to give alleged quotations his own desired meaning, is to knock off the quotation marks and put the whole thing in italics:

Henry's worst trait, Tugwell once remarked, *is his habit of rationalizing, as direct messages from God, the dirty deals and compromises that all politicians must engage in.*

No quote marks, no statement of source or authority; just italics. I never saw that one before.

Fact and fancy. Possibly I nourish Wallace preconceptions of my own sort, but I have never been able to see anything craven in his not reading every word of his fighting speech to the brawling thousands in Madison Square Garden; the entire speech had been released to the papers and the presses were rolling it out to the millions, even then. And so with that confused row with Baruch about the atom bomb; I see no reason why Wallace should have bowed to Baruch's demand for Wallace's unqualified endorsement of a statement he, Wallace, believed only in part. To these routine assertions as to Wallace's "lack of guts," Macdonald adds one of his own: that Wallace flew to Palestine in time of strife, there to get away from taking a stand on Russia. Now, really!

In a dismal refrain, Macdonald repeats the same assertion: *"There is no recorded case of Henry Wallace's separating himself, on an issue of principle, either from power or from those who dispense it."* It would be hard to frame a more perfect example of willful distortion. Isn't this the same Wallace who backed Milo Perkins against Jesse Jones and made an end to breaks in the supply line at the cost of public rebuke and demotion by his President in time of war?

Who drove off Southern support for his renomination as Vice President at Chicago with those five chill, cutting words: "The poll tax must go"? Who, in consequence of flat refusal to obey

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Byrnes's demand that he, Wallace, keep quiet about what he considered a warmongering policy against Russia, was dismissed by President Truman from the cabinet? And who now, having disdained to treat for reëntrance to the Democratic ranks at the price of compromise with a complete conviction that both old parties are leading us to war and ruin anew, thrusts aside the support of the complacently respectable and smugly intellectual alike to head a third party?

You don't have to agree with a man like that at every turn in order to love and admire his integrity and courage. I don't think this book is going to hurt him.

AMBITIOUS MAN

THE IDES OF MARCH, by Thornton Wilder (Harpers; $2.75).

THORNTON WILDER possesses several distinctive virtues as a creative literary artist, but unfortunately none of them has much to do with his actual skill as a writer. He has an adventurous mind, which makes him try new and interesting fields without resting comfortably on already won laurels. He is of an independent nature, which leads him to write as he pleases without being intimidated by critics or public. He is ambitious, which makes him do difficult and arresting things, even if not always seeming too well equipped for them. He has versatility, which results in his knowing his way about in both the novel and the drama. And he knows the advantage of leisure, which enables him to take his time about polishing his work, even to the extent of allowing fourteen years to elapse between novels.

Most of these characteristic traits can be summed up by recalling that his last work of fiction, *Heaven's My Destination,* a humorous story about an itinerant American evangelist, was published in 1934. Now he emerges with his fifth novel since 1926, an earnest and scholarly reconstruction of the last years of Julius Caesar.

Brilliance unfulfilled. Despite his versatility and change of pace, there are two consistent qualities in the books and plays of Thornton Wilder. They are intelligently romantic in tone and they leave one with the disturbing impression that, skillful and imaginative as they are, they are the work of an author whose originality and splendid intentions considerably exceed his achievements.

This was true in the case of such justifiably successful plays as "Our Town" and "The Skin of Our Teeth," and it is even more true in *The Ides of March,* an ambitious and not altogether successful novel. As a work of historical fancy it is so superior to such confectionery as the Shellabarger-Costain-Winsor school of romance that comparison is a little insulting. As a work of scholarship and a reconstruction of both the letter and spirit of a celebrated period in human annals, it is brilliant. But in the end you feel that, while an impressive setting and cast of characters have been provided, something has gone wrong with the drama.

The plan of the novel is to present a living portrait of Roman social, cultural, political and sexual life in the final days of the republic. His device is to use imaginary letters and documents, presumably written by Caesar, Cicero, Catullus, Brutus, Cleopatra and other eminent men and women of the period. Although such celebrated matters as the Ides of March conspiracy against Caesar, the relationship between the Roman dictator and the Egyptian queen, the tumultuous beginning of the love of Marc Antony for Cleopatra, and the tortured desire of the poet Catullus for the brilliant and corrupt Clodia Pulcher, are contemplated once more, the novel is chiefly concerned with the mind and genius of Caesar.

He is at once the central figure, the chief triumph and the cause of the essential weakness in *The Ides of March.* All of the novel, whatever side issues it may take up, is centered in his fascinating character. Its outstanding virtue is that, as depicted in its pages, his distinction of mind and personality rings convincingly true. The weakness is that, having established his Caesar as a great leader, a believable intellect and a living man, Wilder does so disappointingly little with him.

Pygmies and dictators. Wilder evidently planned a study of the ideas of democracy, dictatorship, liberty and power, not through any overworked parallels between today and the world of Julius Caesar, but by contemplating them against a classic background which makes them seem virtually timeless. The fact that Wilder tells of transferring a system of conspiratorial chain-letters, which was employed by Italian anti-Fascists against Mussolini, to the conspiracy of the republicans against Julius Caesar, indicates his interest in studying the past in the light of the present. He himself calls his work "a fantasia on certain events and persons of the last days of the Roman republic."

In the process many provocative ideas about power and greatness are considered, but they are not dramatized sufficiently or fought out in proper terms of human conflict. There are many interesting glimpses of history as it may have been, but neither in its conceptions nor in its drama is *The Ides of March* as provocative or as meaningful as it always seems on the verge of becoming.

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Nevertheless, there is no denying Wilder a considerable success in the depiction of his hero. The device of having Caesar pour out his soul to his crippled friend, Turrinus, enables the author to present memorable intimate views of the dictator. It is not easy to forget Caesar lamenting his own superstitions, longing to do away with official religion but prevented from so doing by a lingering fear that he may be mistaken, contemplating the nature of political greatness and instinctively sympathizing with the plotters against himself.

It is one of the weaknesses of the book that the enemies of Caesar appear such pygmies in contrast to the magnanimity and largeness of the dictator's vision. Certainly the smugness of Brutus is made deeply unattractive, and Caesar's other foes are no better. The result is that the greatness of Julius Caesar, as opposed to the insect scale of his foes, makes what seems a sympathetic portrait of dictatorship.

RICHARD WATTS JR.

WORTH REPRINTING

THE SLEEPWALKERS, by Hermann Broch (Pantheon Books, Inc.; $5).

The Sleepwalkers, first published in 1932 and now presented in a translation by Willa and Edwin Muir, is a historical trilogy. It attempts to explain the collapse of Europe, particularly of Germany, as a "disintegration of values."

St. Augustine, in *The City of God,* says, "A people is a multiple of reasonable creatures conjoined in a general communication of those things which it respects, and to discern the state of a people, you must first consider what those things are." This is an almost exact account of Hermann Broch's historical method: by demonstrating the shifting values of his characters at the different dates of his three novels, he "discerns the state of a people" with extraordinary penetration.

Changing values. "Our feelings," says Broch, "always lag half a century or a full century behind our actual lives." The central character of the first novel (in 1888) places his loyalty in two surviving orders, both doomed. He is an officer when "the man who wears the uniform is content to feel that he is fulfilling the most essential function of his age." Also, he is a Prussian landowner at a time when the aristocracy could still assure itself of its essential superiority to the commercial classes.

By the time of the second novel (1903), the commercial classes occupy the foreground of the narrative. Of an officer who has retired from the army in order to go into business it is now said, "but that only speaks in the man's favor."

The action is concerned with the shady business deals of the swarming characters. Their "values" are betrayed in their emotional life, which is expressed in the women's grasping for married security and in the wandering lusts of the men. For each is isolated in his vocation to personal profit, but

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THE WALL OF DUST

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physical intimacy is only an ironic comment on that isolation.

By the time of the third novel (1918), chaos has so disrupted any original order that the army officer of the first volume, prototype of stability and honor, now lends his protection to a vicious financial swindle which he doesn't begin to understand. In this final volume, the theme inherent throughout is explicitly stated, and the developments of the preceding books are exposed in their logical conclusion.

Moral amnesia. Broch describes the essential predicament of his characters (and our time) in this way: "Man, who was once the image of God, the mirror of a universal value . . . has fallen from his former estate . . . and can do nothing but submit himself to the particular value that has become his profession" and become a "specialist." And in this context there is no distinction between the specialist in medicine and the specialist in murder. The sole end of personal action is the achievement of the business in hand.

If a man is bound and defined by his values, then Broch shows how these personal aspirations, when separated from any "ideal center of values," result in the peculiar moral amnesia of the modern man. "None of our actions remain alive," he says, "except those that consort with our reigning system of values." In this way it becomes easily possible for a character who has founded his business on a murder to forget that murder when, as a successful bourgeois, "he had reverted once more to the commercial system."

Broch calls his trilogy an essay in philosophy, and it is quite true that it is written within the framework of an explicit philosophy of history. Moreover, the narrative is broken by reflective passages which correlate this theme and the story. But the characters are substantial and the meaning of the book is fully contained in their actions. Rather than be explained away as a literary hybrid, the book deserves generous credit as an admirable experiment which enlarges the possibilities of the novel form. JOHN FARRELLY

THEATER: The Irish on the Irish

In the Dublin Gate Theatre's production of Denis Johnston's play, "The Old Lady Says 'No!'," now at the Mansfield, the author reflects bitterly that the great days and the great men have passed from Ireland. Sadly, comparing the Gate Theatre with the old Abbey, comparing the actor Micheal MacLiammoir with Barry Fitzgerald, comparing "The Old Lady Says 'No!'" with "The Plough and the Stars" and "The Playboy of the Western World," you are forced to agree with the harsh judgment of Johnston.

In his fantasy, which ostensibly takes place in the disordered imagination of an actor who is accidentally knocked on the head while playing the role of the martyred Robert Emmet, Johnston examines the reasons for this sorrowful decline. The play is hazily constructed (in a program note the author explains that it follows a musical rather than a theatrical form, which is a dangerous principle) and it is uncompromisingly local, in the usual Irish literary style, which has made us all become experts on the geography of the back streets of Dublin, and the ins-and-outs of the history of the struggle against the English.

It makes its points forcefully enough —that in the new freedom the old high-mindedness has been lost; that living principles have been intellectualized into dilettantes' slogans; that the tragedy of the old heroes has diminished into whining bathos; that, finally, the people who have profited by Emmet's nobility have lost their own, and, in giving tea-party and barroom lip-service to his memory, have rejected him. Irish rebellion, according to the author, has been institutionalized by the state to which it gave birth, and in the process has become the opposite of what it originally represented.

All this is told with a free-ranging wit and eloquence, reminiscent of the dream plays in *Ulysses,* in which myth and erudition are posed amusingly against everyday vulgarity and indifference. The choral passages are fresh and courageously stylized, against cleverly economical backdrops, but the total effect is diffuse and misty. Johnston's earlier and more orthodox play, "The Moon in the Yellow River," had infinitely more vitality.

There is an amateur spirit and performance which can be most pleasant in the theater, bringing, as it sometimes does, a sense of love and fun into an institution that is often too rigid, hard, mechanical—and the amateurishness of the Gate players belongs to that agreeable category. Still, remembering the vigorous and sweeping professionalism of the old Abbey, one is bound to feel that the Irish have given up a garden in exchange for a nosegay.

Obituary. In doing "John Bull's Other Island," the Gate Theatre has taken one of George Bernard Shaw's worst plays and failed to raise it above the level of rather robust and old-fashioned vaudeville on which the script for the most part remains. There is practically no plot in "John Bull's Other Island," and the acid discussions about the failings of the Irish and the British have the ring to them of lectures by a clever professor whose classes we have attended many times before.

Hilton Edwards, as an impossibly romantic Englishman, foolishly in love with the worst aspects of what we have come to think of as the Irish character, is amusing in a broad, energetic way, and Edward Golden delivers a moving, mystical speech with admirable clarity and feeling, but the rest of the production is routine.

Shaw has provided the theater with such an abundant repertory of superb plays that I think a critic is now within his rights in suggesting, mildly, that "John Bull's Other Island" be tenderly laid to rest. IRWIN SHAW

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CORRESPONDENCE

Omniscient Uncle

SIR: A case which needs a little thinking about is that of Maria Formicola. Probably you remember Maria: she came from Italy a few weeks ago to marry a GI sweetheart, who was killed in an automobile accident while she was on the high seas. When she landed, the government very kindly explained to her that she need not go back to cold and hungry Italy if she would just marry some other American GI within three months.

Consider the cloak of omniscience which Uncle Sam has now pulled about his shoulders. First of all, he *knows* Miss Formicola did not really love the GI sweetheart whom she came here to marry. For if she did, this suggestion that she turn her affections off and on would be heartless beyond imagination.

Uncle Sam knows further, in his serene wisdom, that someone honest and reliable will come along within the fateful ninety days; that Miss Formicola, alone and unaided, will single him out infallibly; that this mystic choice, who is to appear out of nowhere, will have the money to support her, a roof to put over her head. What a wonderful fellow you are, Uncle Sam! Have a medal.

New York City ABEL BROWN

No Sponsor

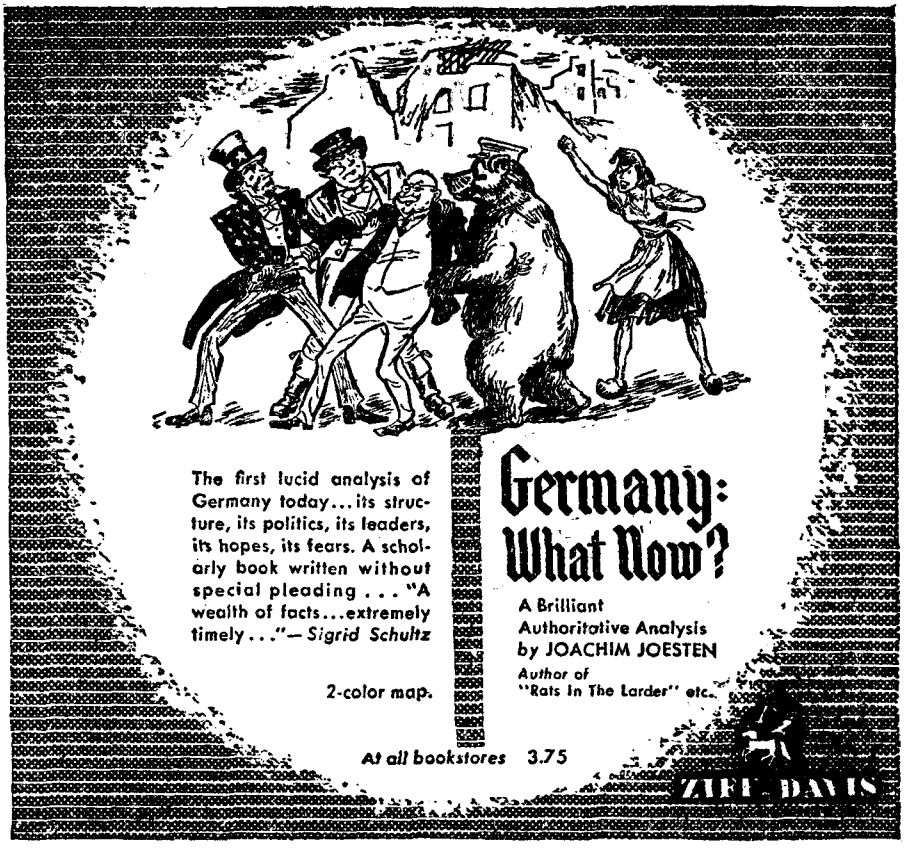
SIR: In a recent issue of the *New Republic* [January 26] you appear to mention my name as a backer of some plan to encourage individuals to acquire "shootin' irons," and to be prepared to use them. Let me hasten to say that I have not seen any publication of the National Economic Council you mention for fully four years, and I am quite in the dark as to what was printed under the Council's auspices . . . I consider the idea absurd, grotesque and wicked. . . . I do not believe in the organizing of private arsenals, or of guerrilla groups . . . for such a course would mean the breakdown of Law and Order.

May I also say that I was connected with the philanthropic corporation you name for about eighteen months only, some twenty years ago, when that foundation appointed me to do a temporary piece of work, in the absence of an official due to illness.

ALEXANDER W. ARMOUR

Princeton, N. J.

[Perhaps Mr. Armour had better investigate the use Merwin K. Hart's "philanthropic corporation" continues to make of his name.—THE EDITORS]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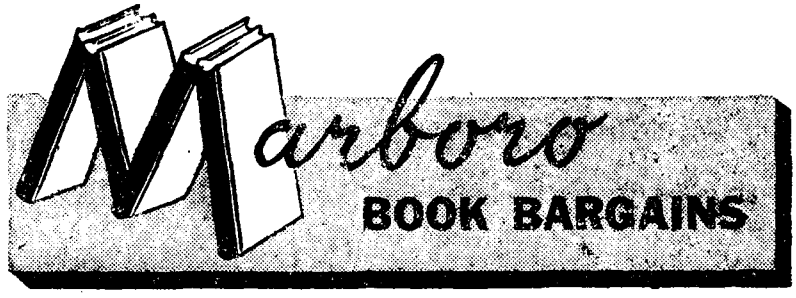

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MOVIES: Back to Adam

MAN in a state of nature is a delicate subject for sophisticated cameras. His story is stripped to essentials, unprotected by particular incident, and a false note rings like a gong. In John Steinbeck's "The Pearl," produced at Studios Churubusco in Mexico City with a wholly Mexican cast, the gong rings changes on the anvil chorus. Primitive man has seldom appeared more pretentiously solemn or less likely to survive.

The story, which purports to be based on a generations-old legend of the Southern California shell fishermen, is contrived and production-ridden. It has no feel of legend; no inevitability, nor magic nor the logical justice of fable. It seems instead a specific narrative of ignorance and black knavery. The characters, I presume, are meant to represent universals of good and evil, but they emerge merely two-dimensional.

Partly this is the fault of Steinbeck, who, in attempting to enlist your pity for his people as individuals, has transformed what may have been a tale of some symbolic stature into a penny dreadful. Partly it is the fault of the acting and directing. I am not familiar with the careers of Pedro Armendariz and Maria Marques, who play the leads, so I am unable to say if their performances in "The Pearl" represent their usual style. The way they interpret roles pitched at a level just above the aborigine is to move very slowly, to look bewildered and to strike picturesque attitudes. The effect is less simple than simple-minded.

The numbed quality of this interpretation is emphasized by the fact that, knowing little English, the actors converse in a labored pidgin that bears no relation to colloquial, not to mention domestic, speech in any language.

The story of "The Pearl" is of a native diver who finds a pearl of startling size, is set upon by a murderous gem buyer and driven, with his wife and infant, into the wilderness. Finally cornered, he turns and kills his pursuer, but not before his son has himself been killed. The couple then returns home and the pearl is thrown back into the sea. You can see that there may have been a legend in all this, but what it comes down to is that the fisherman does not know how to sell his treasure or even what it is worth, that his only potential buyer is a homicidal thief, that he loses his head and runs when there are a dozen obvious ways to protect himself. It is fortuitous, accidental; it lacks the stylizing that generations of telling should have given it.

The picture, finally, is overburdened with elaborate effects. There is a dance, for example, at a native fiesta that is a very pretty thing to watch, but so rigidly precise and so meticulously staged that only long hours of rehearsal could have achieved it. The film reaches its climax in the most harassing chase since Liza crossed the ice. Men, dogs and Indian trackers pursue the terrified couple through swamp and desert and up into the barren hills. The fugitives fall and crawl, gasp and faint; they drag each other along, threaten each other, encourage each other. And it is just a hackneyed production scene with the camera boom always hovering but never allowed to cast its shadow. That in essence is the fault of "The Pearl": it is only some actors gone native on location.

The four seasons. A very much better picture of the natural life is the French "Farrebique." In fact, if you accept it at the leisurely, almost somnolent level at which it is produced, it may strike you as a moving and memorable report. You can't call it a story, for it is virtually a documentary; an account of the passage of a year on a prosperous but exceedingly primitive farm in the Massif Central. The people in it—presumably they are actually the Farrebique family and they are not

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otherwise identified—live out this year under what must be the continuous observation of the camera. It greets them in the morning, watches over their meals, goes with them on their chores, sees them to bed. It accompanies them to school and to church, attends a birth, witnesses a death.

The triumph is that the family, and thus the audience, is completely unaware of this alien presence. You cannot fail to be impressed by, and grateful for, the skill and sympathy that must have been spent to achieve such complete relaxation. Professional actors, probably, could never have attained this ultimate feeling of rightness, though they would undoubtedly have punctuated and high-lighted what is now an exceedingly level reportage.

Curiously, the producers who created this side of the picture with such sure hands have failed in another way. They have indulged in a great deal of "art" photography—leaves falling on a mill stream, close-up footprints in the mud, birds nesting in the hedgerows. They have also inserted long and repetitious passages of stop photography: the technique that shows buds writhing into flowers or draws a shadow like a curtain across the land. The film drags as a consequence, and the astonishing veracity of the human sequences suffers from contact with this fanciness.

There is a thread of narrative to "Farrebique." The old father, who knows he approaches the day when he must turn over the land, worries for its future. Will the new house be built, will his industrious but already crabbed eldest son be able to hold together what is his by unquestioned tradition? And what of the younger son, for whom there is no inheritance? Will he leave, will he marry, will he prosper?

But it is the merest thread. This picture really is anthropology—the most understanding and simple and convincing study of a little segment of society you are likely to see. You may not care much about farming in such vast detail; I think you will care, though, about the farm Farrebique.

ROBERT HATCH

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MUSIC: Operatic Best Seller

SINCE Ernst Krenek's jazz fantasy, "Jonny Spielt Auf," in 1927, no contemporary opera has taken possession of the world's leading opera stages so swiftly and universally as Benjamin Britten's "Peter Grimes," which received its first full-scale US performance at the Metropolitan in February. "Peter Grimes" was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation. It was given at Tanglewood, Massachusetts, in August, 1946—after preliminary performances in England the previous year—by a cast of students of the Berkshire Music Center, with Leonard Bernstein conducting. Britten flew from London to see his opera, and immediately vented publicly his sorrow over the extent to which the production fell short of his hopes.

Metropolitan fumble. It is just as well that Britten did not make a second trip for the Metropolitan première, for even his ready tongue might have been paralyzed by the sights and sounds of that occasion. Emil Cooper, the venerable Russian conductor, flouted the composer's indicated wishes repeatedly, as he sought to transform the score into Moussorgsky or Rimsky-Korsakov. Dino Yannapoulos, the stage director, shuttled the chorus back and forth like frightened cattle, and failed to get the story clearly told. As a bitter wag observed, there is only one thing worse than the Metropolitan's neglect of modern operas: its production of one.

Yet we must be grateful, in the face of the Metropolitan's limited budget and equally limited artistic outlook, for the good intention which gave "Peter Grimes" a hearing, however partially it was realized. The opera creates an absorbing over-all mood and achieves many strong theatrical effects; for a composer of 32 (the age of Richard Strauss when he wrote the now forgotten "Guntram") it is an amazing accomplishment.

Before the main action begins, Peter Grimes, a fisherman who lives by himself in a lonely house on the edge of a seaswept cliff worthy of a Gothic novel, has been involved in the "accidental" death at sea of a young apprentice. When the apprentice's successor also meets his death in undefined circumstances, the townspeople are filled with suspicious apprehension. Montagu Slater's libretto, drawn from a poem by George Crabbe, is a study in the group psychopathology of simple people confronted by evidence which suggests that one of their number is guilty of shocking abnormal behavior.

The book of Freud. The libretto takes no sides and preaches no moral. Grimes's despair over his inability to straighten out his life in the village, rather than any protagonism of universal tragedy, accounts for the madness which leads him to row his boat out to sea and sink it. The townsfolk are clearly responding in a primitive reflex of mass emotion, and nothing in the text or action implies that we should consider them the representatives of social justice. The whole conflict is distinctly modern in tone and viewpoint: "Peter Grimes" is basically a case study of a misfit in society, not an epic of man at the mercy of fate.

Britten's score is a montage of styles and devices, full of borrowings from Strauss, Stravinsky, Puccini and Moussorgsky. Yet the music somehow hangs together, and it always speaks in an individual voice. It has many special merits—an atmospheric evocation of the sea, which is the constant background against which the action takes place, altogether superb choral work; and the most natural prosody in the setting of English words since Purcell in the seventeenth century. Though Britten's more recent opera, "The Rape of Lucretia" (given its American première in Chicago last June), is more economical in means and less derivative in manner, it lacks the big spectacular sweep and the contemporary psychological texture which have seized

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upon the imagination of audiences wherever "Peter Grimes" has been given. However blurred the Metropolitan production may have been, "Peter Grimes" was a success, and should hold its own in the repertory.

American singers. Despite the hazards placed in their way by the conductor and stage director, the principals in the Metropolitan performance uniformly showed both a good sense of the stage and perceptive, stable musicianship. Ten years ago it would probably have been impossible to bring together a persuasive cast so nearly all-American. In the title role the experienced Frederick Jagel, who is celebrating his twentieth anniversary at the Metropolitan, was, if anything, too successful in evoking sympathy for his ambiguous character. The other chief roles were in the care of Regina Resnik, Claramae Turner, Martha Lipton, Hugh Thompson, Jerome Hines and John Brownlee. CECIL SMITH

RADIO: Introducing the IH-Factor

SUNDAYS at seven p.m., on the ABC network, there is a program called "Child's World." Not the least of its distinctions is the fact that it has one of the highest IH-factors in nighttime, network radio.

The IH-factor is this department's gift to the ever expanding art of radio measurement: to Broadcast Measurement Bureau; Nielsen Radio Index; The Pulse, Inc.; CBS' Stanton-Lazarsfeld Program Analyzer; the Schwerin Reactocaster used by NBC; the Ernest Walker machine that measures yaks-per-second on comedy shows.

Best known to the listeners, of course, are the Hooperatings. The Hooper figures furnish the basis for computing my own IH-factor. Take, for instance, NBC's program opposite "Child's World." If you accept that one, you'll find yourself saddled not only with Jack Benny and Mary Livingstone but also with a pair of tobacco auctioneers, "Rochester" and a Hooperating of 27.1.

Stupendous IH. If you subtract Benny's rating from the 100 percent of potential radio listeners at that hour, you get the inverse Hooper, or IH-factor—a mere 72.9—denoting the number of sets not tuned in on the Benny show. But if you stand "Child's World's" rating on its head, the IH-factor is a stupendous 99.1!

The program proves again the fallibility of rules. Sunday at seven is a home hour. To be favored in the conventional, stick-in-the-mud, straight Hooper sense, a show broadcast at that time should appeal to the entire family, with realism for the adults, lack of inhibition plus recognizability for the youngsters, and natural humor for all. It need not necessarily have anything vital to say. But if it possesses that virtue too, and in addition sparkles with novelty plus an occasional touch of genuine excitement—well. "Child's World" has all these qualities.

A lady by the name of Helen Parkhurst, who I understand counts for something in the field of progressive education for children, runs the show. Once a week she gathers about her, in her New York apartment, a half-dozen boys and girls, aged about 11. The kids stand around a dining-room table. On the table are microphones whose wires are led to a recording machine operated by an engineer in the kitchen. There is a reason for making them stand— Miss Parkhurst discovered that the youngsters are more at ease when they have freedom of movement. She asks questions. They answer.

Do you think comics are "bad" for kids? How, in your opinion, do children from low-income families feel about being poor? What is the opinion of a child—not a parent or an educator or a professional do-gooder—on racial and religious prejudices practised at the child level? What does "being afraid" mean to one at the age

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of ten, and how does an eleven-year-old feel when he steals or lies or kicks his four-year-old sister?

Some of the answers would surprise you, others might pain you, and many are merely amusing or interesting or instructive or just "cute." Miss Parkhurst's guests are as serious and honest as she is. Together, they produce a half-hour of extraordinary quality.

Trade talk. *Broadcasting* magazine and this commentator have reason to mention Clifford J. Durr frequently, since he is a member of the Federal Communications Commission. I have frequently called Durr the most conscientious representative left to the people of the USA on the FCC. So maybe there is hope, in a recent issue of *Broadcasting*:

Since President Truman's reversal in stance, indicating appeal to New Deal elements, Washington observers now wouldn't be surprised if he reappointed Left-Winger Clifford J. Durr in advance of June 30 expiration of his seven-year term. Chances of Senate confirmation, it is thought, are practically nil, but reappointment would make big hit with lefties, lots of educators, and CIO.

As soon as I get one of Miss Parkhurst's kids to parse this paragraph, for politics as well as syntax, I'll have it spoken by Henry Morgan and charted on Ernest Walker's yak-per-second machine. Meanwhile, here are two other quotes from the same issue of *Broadcasting*. Says the executive vice-president of the Duane Jones agency: "We would rather have a million listeners and have them do what we say, than have twelve million listeners who are merely entertained."

Adds Miss Regina Schuebel, the same agency's very attractive radio director (as quoted indirectly by *Broadcasting's* writer): "The prime reason for a sponsor's use of air time is to sell his products . . . so sponsor identification and sales power must never be sacrificed for entertainment value."

The Duane Jones agency is a leading exponent of the science of selling soap via daytime air-opera and box-tops. Now if only Durr can adapt himself, maybe he'll have a job when he loses that FCC post. SAUL CARSON

HENRY WALLACE'S COLUMN

(Continued from page 10)

Long-term, low-interest loans must be granted to housebuilders to help them produce housing on a mass scale.

Congress must assist in appropriating sufficient funds to construct 4.5 million homes to meet the emergency need within the next three years through the joint coöperation of private and public enterprise. We must remember that 85 percent of our veterans have annual incomes of less than $3,000 per year. Twelve-thousand-dollar homes and $125-per-month rentals will not help these veterans, but will divert badly needed building materials from those whose need is greatest.

This is an ambitious program. But America was founded and grew great on the basis of our courage and determination to build a better world for our children.

The estimated federal expenditure in the 1948-49 fiscal year for housing and community facilities is $38 million. This contrasts with a figure of $113 million in 1947-48 and $403 million back in the 1946-47 period. It represents less than one percent of the total budget, 79 percent of which is going for war preparations and the costs of World War II.

In his budget message to Congress, Truman noted that "expenditures for housing and community facilities decrease. Completion of veterans' re-use housing and curtailment of mortgage purposes . . ." are responsible for the cut. One concludes that the Administration feels the veterans'-housing program is finished.

The $38 million for housing in 1948-49 might be compared with the $38 million that the State Department Commodity Reports include as the amount to go to Iceland's 130,000 inhabitants under the full ERP program.

The nation that became the arsenal of democracy, that fought and won a war against a depression and a war against fascism, all within one generation, cannot be defeated by the piteous wails of "business as usual" bipartisanship.

We need a "get tough" policy against slums, disease and poverty.

Henry A. Wallace

BANDWAGON

Southern Exposure

"It seems to me," Cox [Representative Eugene Cox of Georgia] told congressional colleagues, "that the good Germans were the Nazis who were loyal to the government which the United States recognized at the time (the Hitler government), not those who were disloyal." – *From Drew Pearson's syndicated column.*

No Change

Prince Karan Singh, 16 years old and the only son of Sir Hari Singh, Maharajah of Kashmir:

"I think you have a very good form of government. Everybody seems to have a chance. You see a man and he is not doing much and then you see him again and he is President of the United States." – *John O'Reilly in the New York* Herald Tribune.

Cold War Continues

PROKOFIEFF OPERA
TO BE GIVEN HERE

Russian Communists' Criticism Ignored by Metropolitan in Plans for "War and Peace"

– *Head and subhead in the New York* Times.

Economics for the Millions

They [National Apartment Owners' Association] contended, too, that rent controls are partly responsible for high food prices. This argument went:

"Holding down the rent of a family has made more of its money available to bid up the prices of food, clothing and other essential or nonessential commodities." – *AP dispatch from Washington.*

Our readers are invited to contribute; $2 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, c/o New Republic. Please enclose the original clippings. – The Editors

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	1948	1946
ALP Candidate (Isacson).....	55.9	27.0
Democratic Candidate	31.0	44.0
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